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PLUCK AND LUCK

STORIES OF ADVENTURE.

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MONTE CRISTO, JR; OR, THE DIAMONDS OF THE BORCIAS.

By EDWARD AUSTIN
AND OTHER STORIES



The guards were rushing down the rocks to seize them. The old man pushed his young friend

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MONTE CRISTO, Jr.

OR, THE DIAMONDS OF THE BORGIIAS

By HOWARD AUSTIN

CHAPTER I.—In the Prison at Toulon.

The City of Toulon is somewhat famous in French history, as it is noted as the scene of a great siege, where the great Napoleon first distinguished himself. During the reign of that third Napoleon, and some years before the German armies swept through France, a young fisherman lived at Toulon who was destined to play an important part in his native city, and in the great capital of France as well. This young man's name was Conrad Picardo, and he resided in the outskirts of the city, close by the seashore. The young fisherman was the sole support of his aged father and mother before he was twenty years of age, as the old man had lost the use of his right arm when his boat was wrecked some years before.

He was deeply attached to his mother, he was devoted to his father, and he spent most of his leisure time in company with a young orphan girl who lived near them, and was known as Pauline Faber. Conrad was a tall, manly youth before he arrived at the age of twenty, and he could then pull an oar or steer a boat with any fisherman in the harbor.

Many of his neighbors remarked that young Conrad Picardo was the best-looking youth along the seashore, that he did not bear any resemblance to his father, and that he would yet distinguish himself as a sailor if a war broke out with some great maritime power. It was even whispered by several that there was some mystery connected with the young man's birth, and that he was only the adopted son of the old fishing couple. It was a warm evening in the month of June, and the young fisherman was in the act of mending his nets, when he noticed a large boat, worked by galley slaves, leaving a man-of-war, to proceed to the prison in the harbor. Young Conrad had piercing eyes, and as he looked at the boat in question he perceived an aged-looking man who appeared to be fainting from his exertions at the oar.

"How I pity that old man, and it is a shame to work him so hard, no matter what his crime may be."

"The man you saw committed no crime," said a

voice behind him, while a groan escaped from the speaker a moment after.

Conrad turned around with a slight start, and he saw that the speaker was a young maiden of eighteen, who was dressed in the garb of a peasant. The young girl was holding a small spyglass in her hand at the moment, and Conrad could see the tears streaming down her pale cheeks. He said:

"You know the aged convict then?"

"Yes, I should know him."

"Is he related to you, then?" asked the young fisherman.

"Yes, he is my father."

"Your father, indeed! May I ask what crime was he accused of to be punished thus?"

"He was accused of treason to France and to the Emperor, but he is not guilty. Oh, I would give my life to rescue him from that living death."

"You are not French, I imagine, and I believe you are a stranger here?"

"I am not French, as I was born in Italy, and so was my father."

"Then how comes it that he is serving as a convict in the galleys?"

The strange girl seemed to be impressed with the young man, as she moved down toward the water and motioned him to follow her, as she said:

"I am a stranger here, and I have no friends in France, but I am not poor. It is four years since I have seen my poor father, and he has been toiling in the galleys during all that time."

"Where was he arrested?" inquired Conrad.

"In Paris."

"Have you visited your father in prison, young lady?"

"I have not. I did not know where he was until I saw him some minutes ago."

"Did he see you then?"

"He did, and that was why he fainted. Oh, father—father, what can I do for you?"

Becoming deeply interested in the stranger, Conrad Picardo suggested:

"If you apply to the authorities you may be permitted to visit your father."

"No, no! I will not apply to the authorities, as that would excite suspicion."

"What do you propose to do then, young lady?"
 "Will you betray me if I confide in you?"

"You may be certain I will not."

"Then I will tell you honestly that I propose to rescue my dear father."

"That will be impossible, almost, as very few prisoners ever escape from the galleys. Then you must see that your father is an old man."

The young girl seized the young man's hand on the instant and pressed it eagerly as she inquired:

"Oh, you are young, and strong, and brave, I am certain. Will you not assist me in rescuing my brave father from that horrid fate? I have money, and I will reward you. I will bless you and pray for you also. I can see that you pity me and you feel for him. Give me some hope that you will aid me, and I will be your slave forever after."

"Would that I could aid you in the enterprise, young lady, but I——"

The young girl pressed the speaker's hand again, and tearful were her dark eyes as she groaned forth:

"Poor father, poor father! Can I get no one to aid me in rescuing you? Dear young man, I will give you ten thousand francs—yes, double as much—if you will only aid me in getting my poor father out of that dreadful prison."

Conrad was deeply impressed by the appeal of the devoted daughter, and he bent his head on his breast as if to ponder over the proposition, while he remarked:

"If I could but see the way."

"I will show you the way. Dear young man, let us consult together, and we will think of some plan for rescuing my adored father."

"What is his name?" asked the young fisherman.

"He was a nobleman in his own land, and he was once known as Count Borgia, but he dropped the title, and he has since been known as Captain Borgia."

"How did you discover that he was here in Toulon, young lady?"

"By mere accident. I have been in France for over a year, and I have visited many prisons here during that time. As my father was a secret political prisoner, he did not receive an open trial, and I could find no record of his committal."

"Is he as old as he seems?"

"He is not. My father is not more than fifty, and when I saw him before, four years ago, his hair was as dark as yours. Oh, can you not suggest some means of effecting his rescue, noble young man, and I will reward you?"

Conrad smiled, and then shook his head as he replied:

"I do not seek reward from you, young lady, and I do not know what I can do, but I will think over the subject while out in the boat to-night. I sometimes visit the prison below to supply fish, and it may be that I can see your father and speak with him to-morrow."

"Oh, you are good and kind, and I feel in my heart that you will aid me."

The young man and the Italian girl consulted for some time, little dreaming that their conversation was overheard by another young man, who was concealed in an old boat-house near where they had been standing. Conrad escorted the

young girl toward the inn where she was stopping, and which was situated on the outskirts of the city. When they were out of sight in the distance the young man who had been listening to them stole out of the boathouse and cast his eye down toward the prison as he muttered to himself:

"You will go there with the fish to-morrow, Conrad Picardo, but I will take care that you will never come out again. Pauline Faber will soon be an heiress, and she will be my wife."

The speaker's name was Reuben Metcalfe, and he was the only son of the man who kept the tavern where the strange Italian girl was stopping. While the young folks were consulting together to devise some means for the rescue of the girl's father, the old convict was lying in a cell in the prison, and the governor was standing over him, saying:

"I have received orders this evening to place you in solitary confinement. Hereafter you will not have to labor in the galleys, but you will not breathe the fresh air as much as you have done."

CHAPTER II.—Was He Lost at Sea?

When Conrad Picardo parted with the Italian girl that evening he did not promise to take part in an enterprise having for its object the rescue of her father. The noble young fellow did pledge his word, however, that he would attempt to see the old convict on the following morning and inform him that his daughter was close at hand ready to aid such an attempt. About eight o'clock that morning the governor of the prison was walking along the fortifications with his eyes fixed on a fishing boat that was endeavoring to work into the harbor.

"They are steering this way, but the boat will not reach here."

Even as the governor spoke to himself the boat he was watching capsized, and four of the persons in it went under the rushing waves, never to rise again. The fifth person in the boat arose to the surface again and commenced to breast the billows with great courage and vigor. The person thus striking out for the island prison was young Conrad Picardo, and he was not perceived by any one except the governor. After several heroic efforts the young fellow was dashed up on the deserted strand, and he could barely manage to crawl to the rocks above when the governor of the prison appeared before him.

"You had a narrow escape, young man."

"Yes, governor, I had. Thank heaven, I have escaped, but I fear my poor friends are lost."

The governor of the prison cast his eyes out also as he remarked:

"The others are lost. If you are strong enough to follow me, I will give you some nourishment."

Many a wistful glance did the young man cast out on the waves as he followed the governor up a narrow path, and he did not notice that they were moving toward a secluded portion of the prison instead of to the dwelling apartments of the officials. They soon reached a side entrance, and the governor opened an iron door with a private key.

The man then led the way up a flight of stone steps, sending forth a peculiar signal at the same time. On reaching the third floor of the prison

Conrad noticed for the first time that six of the prison guards were following him. Before the young fellow could realize what their purpose was, he was thrust into a cell, and a heavy iron door was closed upon him. The governor then turned to his guard, saying:

"I received a warrant for that young man's arrest early this morning. He is a political prisoner, and you are not to mention anything about him. He will be known as No. 67, and that is all you are to know about him."

The man then dismissed his guards. While pondering over his unlooked-for arrest, a small panel in the iron door was pushed aside, and the governor addressed him, saying:

"Your name is Conrad Picardo, I believe?"

"It is, governor. May I know why I am treated in this manner?"

"Did you intend to visit the prison this morning?"

"I did, governor."

"With a load of fish?"

"Yes, sir. I have visited here often before, as you may remember."

"I do remember. Did you not also intend to consult with a certain prisoner who is confined here?"

The young man was silent, as he did not know what answer to make. The governor waited some moments, and then said:

"I see that my information is correct, and you will understand that you are a prisoner hereafter. Your number is 67, and the person you desire to consult is known as 66. He is in the next cell to you, but I do not imagine that will have much chance of consulting with him."

"I have committed no crime, and if I have, I should be tried by the law."

"You have been tried by the law and found guilty," answered the stern governor. "If you should ever get out of here, remember that the emperor has long ears, and that he does not tolerate interference with his prisoners; you would rescue an Italian traitor, and now you will have time to meditate in your own behalf."

"I know not who betrayed me, but I swear to you that I will find out and punish the wretch. I am not guilty of any crime, and I only promised the Italian girl to tell her father that she was in Toulon. I have loved ones who will starve if I am kept here. I was to have been married next week, and now my promised bride will weep her eyes out for me."

The governor chuckled to himself, and then replied in harsh tones, saying:

"Your promised bride will console herself with another husband. I will leave you now, and I trust you will have patience, as you will remain here forever."

Loud wails were heard in Toulon that night, especially along the seashore, as thirteen boats that sailed out from the harbor on the previous night were never heard of again. Conrad's father and mother wept for him as one lost to them forever, and so did Pauline Faber, the young orphan girl, who resided with her aunt in the neighboring cottage. Four days after the morning of that wreck it was announced that the humble young girl had inherited a fortune from a rich uncle in Paris. In the meantime the detective police in Toulon were searching for a strange Italian girl

who had disappeared from the inn on the night before the storm. Pauline Faber hastened away to Paris to receive the fortune left to her, and Reuben Metcalfe followed her there soon after. The tavernkeeper sold out his business soon after that and followed his son to the great city. Three days after the departure of the tavernkeeper a rough-looking boy, who spoke with a foreign accent, called on the old fishing couple who were deploring the death of their brave son. After giving her some money, the boy said to Conrad's mother:

"You have lost your son, and I ask you to adopt me now. You do not remember me, but I knew your brave son. I do not believe that he is dead, but it will be well for you not to say so at present. If he is alive I will restore him to you hereafter."

The old couple accepted the offer thus made to them, and the rough boy with the Italian accent became an inmate of their cottage. That boy was no other than Celia Borgia in disguise, and her object in lingering near Toulon was to rescue her father. The young girl was also aware who had betrayed Conrad Picardo, but she did not know that the young fisherman was a prisoner in the next cell to her father.

CHAPTER III.—Plotting for Liberty.

Conrad Picardo never gave up the hope of escaping, and day after night his thoughts dwelt on that subject. Neither of the prisoners could hear a word from the outside world, as the surly jailers who handed them in their bread and water would not converse with them. They soon managed to converse with themselves, however, by means of knocking on the stone wall that separated their cells. We have said that young Conrad was an intelligent youth, and he had often read of a famous man who worked for years in another city in order to effect his escape from a strong prison. On the day after his imprisonment the young fisherman found a large needle in one of his pockets, which he had been in the habit of using in mending his nets. After contenting himself with knocking on the wall for some time, until they had adopted a code of signals, the prisoners worked at a given point on the floor. Their object in thus working was to open a small passage from one cell to the other, through which they could converse. With the aid of the strong needle Conrad made good headway, and he managed to conceal the stuff thus removed from the eyes of the jailer. After being engaged in that way for three months the friends in misfortune were able to converse through a small passage not larger than a mouse hole. Then Captain Borgia learned all about his young daughter and her acquaintance with Conrad. When Conrad heard the prisoner's story he felt assured that he was dealing with an honest and a noble man, and they plotted together night after night toward securing their freedom.

The old Italian told the young fisherman that he could command a large amount of money and jewels if he could only reach the Island of Corsica. That island was then under the control of France, but it had been ruled by Italy up to the time of the great Napoleon. There was no window in the

cell occupied by Conrad, but there was a small one in the Italian's apartment.

The jailers scarcely ever entered the cells except when they had armed guards with them, and those armed guards were so placed as to be ready to assail the prisoners if necessary. When the plan to escape was agreed on, the active young fisherman set himself to work in order to dig a passage into Captain Borgia's cell through the stone and mortar. Nine months after his confinement, Conrad succeeded in opening a passage large enough to allow him to crawl into the Italian's cell. The bars on the small window were also cut away, so that they could be broken by a young man as vigorous as the fisherman. The two friends having accomplished so much, set themselves to work to form a rope. To accomplish that object they were compelled to cut up their own scanty clothing, as they were not supplied with quilts or blankets or bedding of any kind.

The small window opened out on the rocks near one end of the island, and it was fully sixty feet above the nearest point. To their great disappointment, they discovered that they could only form thirty feet of rope at the most. That was so frail as to make the young fisherman tremble at the thought of his friend escaping thereby. One moonlight night Conrad peered out from the small window upon the rugged rocks below, and he then turned to his companion with a shudder, saying:

"My dear friend, we must procure more rope, or we will be dashed to pieces on those rough rocks."

"It is not the rocks I fear so much, but the water beyond, as I cannot swim much."

"If we can but reach the water," replied the young fisherman, "I will pledge my life to support you until we strike the shore beyond, as I am a regular sea-dog."

While the young man was thus speaking he lowered the rope, and he soon discovered that it did not reach half the distance to the rocks.

But they had no bedclothes to tear up, and there was nothing for them to do except to tear up some of their scanty clothing. Conrad's skill in mending his nets enabled him to string together more strips of clothing, until the frail rope reached within about twenty feet of the highest rock beneath them. Having secured one end of the rope to a broken bar on the window, the old convict turned and clasped his young friend's hand, saying:

"We will make the venture now, and you will go first. If you should escape, seek my daughter, and tell her that you are my dearest friend next to herself. You are young and active, and you will succeed in leaving this wretched place, while I may perish in the attempt."

"We will escape together," responded the young man.

After casting cautious glances out of the window, the young fisherman proceeded to descend by the frail rope until he was within about twenty feet of the rock. The old man watched him from above without uttering a word. After drawing a long breath and gazing below to measure the distance, the active young fisherman let himself fall as lightly as possible. A sigh of relief escaped from the old convict as he saw his young friend landing on the rock in safety, and he then made ready to try the dangerous descent.

Oh, how Conrad's heart did beat with anxiety

as he saw the old man gliding down on the frail rope, and then a deep groan escaped his lips. The wretched rope had parted when the old man was more than thirty feet from the rocks, and fell heavily.

"Are you injured?" gasped Conrad, as he attempted to raise his fellow convict from the rock.

"Dear friend, my right leg is broken, and I cannot move. Away with you and save yourself. Remember what I told you about Corsica and give my love to my dear daughter."

In reply to the command thus given the strong youth bent down and raised the old man in his arms, saying:

"We will live or die together. If we can but reach the water I will support you."

Even as he spoke the noble youth was descending the rocks with his burden. Then out rang a challenge from one of the guards on the fortification above. Staggering down the rocks, with the old man clasped in his arms, Conrad reached the strand as he said to him:

"We will trust to the water."

The words were scarcely uttered when a musket shot rang out from the fortification, followed by a deep groan from the old convict. Pressing his hands around the young man's head for a moment, the old convict groaned forth:

"I am shot in the breast, my dear young friend. Leave me to die and save yourself. It was not fated that I should ever see my dear girl again. I command you to leave me, or you will not live to carry out my instructions."

As the old man spoke he made a last effort and broke loose from the grasp of the young fisherman. They were then up to their waists in the water, and the guards were rushing down the rocks to seize them. The old man pushed his young friend from him, and staggered back on the rocks. He fell and groaned:

"Remember my last words. Away with you ere the guards are on you."

Conrad realized that it would be impossible to escape with the old man, and he plunged into the waves as he cried:

"If you live, old friend, I will save you yet."

CHAPTER IV.—Out in the Waves.

The governor of the prison was the first to reach the strand where the old man was lying.

"Seize the prisoner," he cried to the guards, "and out with the boats to pursue the rascal in the water."

The old convict raised his head and stared out at the water before he turned to the governor with a defiant smile and gasped forth:

"My release is at hand, tool of a tyrant, and you will never seize the brave youth again."

Several of the guards hastened out in two boats, while others stood near the governor with their muskets pointed out. The old convict was breathing very heavily, and those who had seized him saw that he was dying. Another moment and the spirit of the old convict had passed away to the other world. The governor was still watching the water, and so were the armed guards. About a mile from the prison a small sailboat was working around, and in that sailboat was the dis-

guised Italian girl who had devoted her life to rescuing her father. Night after night, for months past, that boat hovered around the island prison.

On the night when the escape was attempted the moon was shining brightly at first, and the young girl could perceive a human form gliding down from the small window of the prison.

"Oh, I do pray that it is my dear father who is escaping, and I will be on hand to aid him."

In the harbor of Toulon, or any other harbor in France for that matter, there was not a better swimmer than Conrad. On rising to draw breath after one of his dives, the young fisherman perceived the two boats pushing out after him, and he also noticed the little sailboat moving in. When the guards perceived the sailboat two of them fired their guns in that direction, as if to give warning to the occupant to keep away from the island. The sailboat did veer around on receiving the signal, but it happened to glide along to the very direction taken by the fugitive in striving to gain the headland. Then it was that the keen eyes of the young woman perceived the swimmer for the first time. Fortunately for that swimmer, the eyes of the guards were not as keen, and Conrad was able to sink again for a long dive without being detected. When the young man arose to the surface the small sailboat was within twenty yards of him, and the boats from the prison were away in her wake. Acting on a sudden impulse, and keeping his head as much under the water as possible, the hardy youth struck out for the sailboat. Celia Borgia was staring wistfully around at the moment, and an exclamation of joy burst from her as her eyes fell on the small moving object. That exclamation was heard by Conrad Picardo, and strange to say he recognized the voice on the instant. When the sailboat reached the young fisherman he raised up his right hand and seized the bow, while its occupant said to him:

"Crawl in and lie on the bottom while I will steer the boat away from your enemies."

Staring up at the rough-looking lad, the young fisherman inquired:

"Good youth, have you a sister?"

"I have not a sister, but I will be a sister to you if you bring me word of a beloved one. I am Celia Borgia, the young girl you befriended one year ago. We thought you were dead, as you disappeared on the morning of the storm."

As the boat swept along toward the lonely headland the young fisherman gave an account of his adventures, and deep were the sighs that escaped from Celia when she heard about her father's mislapse. The young girl then went on to tell that she was living with his mother, that his father was dead, and that no one suspected her of being a girl.

"Tell me about Pauline Faber, who was my betrothed?" eagerly inquired the young man.

"Your mother will tell you about her. She left Toulon to go to Paris soon after you disappeared."

"Has she never returned again?"

"Never. I did hear that she was married in that great city, but my mind was so much occupied about my father that I did not pay much attention to the gossip around me."

The young man could not appear in Toulon again except in disguise. All his friends regarded

him as dead, and dead to them he would remain for the time. Under his guidance the boat reached the highland, where he could find refuge for the time in a small cave which had been a rendezvous for smugglers. The brave young girl resolved to steer back to the city that night, but Conrad warned her not to tell of his escape, even to his own mother. The young woman sailed out again on the following night with a supply of clothing, a false beard, and ample provisions for the fugitive. Sad was her face, however, when she greeted Conrad again in his hiding-place, saying:

"I have bad news for you."

"What is it, young lady?"

"The young woman known as Pauline Faber became an heiress and moved to Paris."

"Then she is not married?"

"Yes, I regret to tell you, she is married, and to a former resident of Toulon."

"What is her husband's name?"

"Reuben Metcalfe, and I believe he was the one who betrayed you that night."

A fearful scowl appeared on the young prisoner's face, and he clenched his hand as he said:

"I will find out the truth, and if it is true I know now why he betrayed me."

The young man and the girl thus strangely thrown together pondered over their wrongs in silence for some time. Conrad was the first to speak, as he inquired:

"Have you money at command, young lady?"

"I have; and you are welcome to all you need of it. I have provided for your mother, and she will not suffer through your absence."

"Where do you propose to go now, young lady?"

"To Paris, to work against the tyrant emperor and his tools."

"Did you ever hear of a certain treasure which your father informed me is concealed on the Island of Corsica?"

"You allude to the diamonds of the Borgias. Yes, I have heard of them, but I do not know where they are concealed."

"He told me where they are, young lady, and I will find them and place them in your hands. Your father told me that they are of immense value. Will you trust me in going in search of them, or will you accompany me?"

"I do not value the diamonds, save that they may give me power to avenge my father. I value your friendship, brave young man, as you were my father's last and truest friend. Will you make a compact with me?"

"What is it?"

"Forget that I am a young lady for the present, and call me Carlos. Come with me to Corsica, and I will share the diamonds with you on certain conditions."

"The diamonds belong to your father, and they will be yours if we find them. I am willing to be your friend and do all that one honest heart can do for you."

"I believe that you are noble, brave and honest. Let me be your brother while I retain this male attire, as I have resolved on working in disguise against my father's enemies. We will go in search of the diamonds together in a large fishing boat that I will purchase. When we secure the diamonds we will go to Paris to work together for vengeance."

The compact thus made by the two young friends was destined to be an important one.

Three days afterward a large fishing boat sailed out of Toulon harbor and anchored off the headland. On that night the disguised girl and the young fisherman left the cave of the smugglers to sail away for the Island of Corsica.

Conrad was rigged up as a rough sailor past prime of life, but there was something noble in his dark, flashing eyes and in his actions.

Although she did not tell Conrad as much just then, Celia had learned from the old fisherwoman that the handsome youth was not her son, and that he had been intrusted to her care by a stranger nearly twenty years before.

CHAPTER V.—Monte Cristo, Jr., Appears

When Louis Napoleon ruled over France, stock gambling and other gigantic speculations flourished in Paris to a wonderful extent. Paris had its lions at that time, and none of them attracted more attention than the handsome young man who was known only as Count Monte Cristo, Jr.

Duelling was also the rage in Paris at the time, and it was soon reported that Monte Cristo, Jr., was the best swordsman in the city. Among those who endeavored to become acquainted with the young lion was a young man who moved in the gayest circles in Paris. This young man was known as Reuben Metcalfe, and his father was an extensive speculator in real estate and on the Stock Exchange. Reuben Metcalfe had a dashing young wife who appeared to be devoted to him in public. Old Metcalfe was a widower, and he resided with his son in a splendid mansion on the outskirts of the city. Some of his friends asserted that he was a vulgar, money-grabbing old wretch, and that he could not trace his ancestry for two generations. The truth was that old Metcalfe kept a tavern on the outskirts of Toulon a few years before; his dashing son had often waited on the customers therein when a boy, and the young man's gay wife was the daughter of a fisherman.

Although Paris was crowded with police and detectives, members of the secret societies who opposed emperors and kings held nightly meetings there. Several plots had been formed against the emperor, and attempts had been made on his life, yet his spies could not break up the meetings.

Among those spies was a certain Italian who had grown rich in his secret office. The man was known as Julien Lorenzo, and he was somewhat past the prime of life. On a certain evening the young man who was known as Monte Cristo, Jr., was seated in one of the private rooms of his mansion, and the boy known as Carlos reclined on a sofa near him. The young man had just returned to Paris from a hasty journey to the south, and he was conversing with the pretended lad about it. That young man was the former Conrad Picardo, the young fisherman of Toulon, and the pretended lad was Celia Borgia.

"I saw my mother, my dear," said he, "but she did not know me in my disguise."

"I am not surprised at that, my dear Monte, as I would scarcely know you if I had not shared your company these two years past."

"And yet I fear if I have any fears that there

is one person here who will recognize me if I am compelled to meet her face to face."

"Do you allude to young Madame Metcalfe?"

"I do. Do not be jealous of her, however, as all my former love has turned to hatred. But there is one thing I want to tell you about my mother."

"What is that, Monte?"

"An old stranger called on her about a year ago, and he was in a terrible state of dejection when he heard that I was dead. When I became your husband you told me that secret about my birth, and I presume that the old man was my real father."

"With the wealth and power at our disposal now, dear Monte, you should be able to trace the old stranger up."

"That is true, and I will try when we settle here with our enemies."

"I hate that wretch, young Metcalfe," said the young woman. "He has spoken to me several times, and he is anxious to be introduced to you. His wife is not as happy as she appears, I am certain, as she must despise the wretch."

"The young wretch was a traitor and a spy years ago, and I know that he is one now. Like unto that famous man whose name you requested me to assume, I will not stop until I have ruined the Metcalfes."

"Your path is clear before you, Monte, in dealing with your enemies, but I have yet to discover who betrayed my father. I made inquiries about my father's old friends here, and I find that there is only one left who knew him in Italy. His name is Julien Lorenzo, and he fled from Italy with my father. I understand that he has become rich by speculating, but he still keeps up his connection with the secret society to which my father belonged."

"Then I will find the man and read his inmost soul."

"He is coming here this very evening, Monte, and I want you to use your strange powers on him; but I must warn you that Lorenzo is not suspected of being a traitor by any of his friends."

A private bell rang at the moment, and the young wife sprang toward the door, saying:

"If this should be Lorenzo I will bring him to you."

The disguised young woman left the room, and the young man prepared to meet his guest in one of his drawing-rooms. The visitor was Lorenzo. When the young count entered the drawing-room he fixed his piercing eyes on the visitor for a moment. The Italian introduced himself, and apologized for his intrusion by saying:

"I heard to-day, count, that you made inquiries about some diamonds at a certain jeweler's, and I came to show you some rare gems that have been in my possession some time."

As the man spoke he produced a case and displayed some magnificent diamonds in antique settings as he continued, saying:

"These came into my possession in a curious manner. They belonged to a compatriot of mine who was obliged to fly with me from Italy. He was obliged to pawn these diamonds here in Paris, and he disappeared soon after. I was poor at the time, also, but I have since acquired some wealth, and I purchased the diamonds from the pawnbroker, as I held the ticket for them."

"What was your friend's name, sir?"

"He was known here as Captain Borgia, but he was a nobleman in his own country."

"Why do you wish to sell the diamonds?"

"Because I am now interested in a speculation that requires more funds than I can command at present, and I am anxious to place them in the hands of someone who will appreciate them. They belonged formerly to the famous diamonds of the Borgias, a family who were rich and powerful in Italy at one time."

The young man examined the diamonds carefully, but he was also reading the mind of the man before him with a keener glance still. Having settled on a price for the gems, the young count made out a check for the amount and handed it to the man, saying:

"I purchase these diamonds because I knew their former owner when I was only a lad. You are mistaken when you said he had no heirs, as he has a daughter, who will receive these diamonds from me."

"I am aware that he had a daughter, but I heard that she had died some years ago."

"She is not dead, I assure you, sir, and she is living in Paris at the present time."

"I—I—am really surprised. Can you give me the address of the young lady, as I would dearly love to call on her?"

"I cannot give you her address at present, but if you will call here to-morrow night I may procure it for you."

The Italian could not gain any more information from the stern young man, and he left the house. The young count was soon up in his private room again with his wife and saying in calm tones:

"I have discovered who betrayed your father, my dear. It was the man who was just here, and whom you called Julien Lorenzo. He not only betrayed your father, but he robbed him also."

The passionate young woman was springing toward the door as if she intended to follow or strike the traitor at once, but her husband held her back as he continued in his calm tones, saying:

"My dear, you must not be too impatient. Fate has thrown the wretch in our way, and we must deal with him as he deserves."

"Did my father mention his name in the prison?"

"He did. This wretch pretends that your father pawned the diamonds that evening, when I know that he had them in his possession when drugged. Your father did not suspect him, and that was the reason I did not mention his name to you before. But now I am certain that he is a spy in the pay of Louis Napoleon, that he betrayed and robbed your father, and that he came here to-night to inform on me if possible."

"Then what will we do, my dear husband, if Louis Napoleon should send secret agents after you?"

"I will denounce Lorenzo this very night in the club where he belongs, and I will have him put to death by the men he is betraying. Let us change our clothes and come with me, as we have important work before us this very night."

CHAPTER VI.—Working Against the Traitors.

Even before Lorenzo was a block from the house where he had sold the diamonds the energetic young avenger had a spy on his tracks. That spy traced the traitor to old Metcalfe's residence, and he then came back to report to his young master. Lorenzo was really in need of a large amount of money at the time, as he was engaged in some stupendous speculations with old Metcalfe. It was true, as the young count had surmised, that old Metcalfe and his son had been secret spies employed by the treacherous Italian long before they left Toulon.

Young Metcalfe acted as a spy in the drawing-room and saloons, where he took notes concerning all those who would betray the least enmity to the ruling emperor. Metcalfe's beautiful young wife did not share in the vile work with her husband, and she was ever ignorant of the part he was playing. While the young man still adored the charming creature she had learned to despise him, and she often thought of the handsome young fisherman whose bones were supposed to be lying at the bottom of the sea outside of Toulon.

Soon after young Monte Cristo appeared in Paris a very wealthy American arrived there also. The American's name was Hiram Woodford, and he was a man a little past the prime of life, wearing a full, heavy dark beard. The American appeared to be a perfect gentleman. He had letters of introduction from respectable houses in New York, and he was soon received in the best society in Paris. He was always accompanied, when paying friendly visits, by an old black man whom he called Jake, and who waited for him in the servants' quarters while he was engaged upstairs. The rich American soon became acquainted with Reuben Metcalfe, and with his father also. He had played with the young man, but never for very high stakes.

On reaching the Metcalfe mansion that evening Lorenzo was ushered into the old man's private office by a servant in livery. He had to wait some time before the old fellow appeared, and he had a chance to ruminate over his interview with the mysterious young count. When old Metcalfe entered the private office the conspirators only exchanged friendly nods with each other, and then Lorenzo commenced the conversation by saying:

"I have sold my diamonds and got my price."

Old Metcalfe rubbed his hands in a gleeful manner.

"I received two hundred thousand francs; and this famous Count Monte Cristo, Jr., as he styles himself, is the purchaser."

"Did he pay you in cash?"

"No, he gave me a check, and here it is."

Old Metcalfe examined the check as he remarked:

"I see he signs his name Monte Cristo, Jr., but that cannot be his real name. What can he mean by adopting the title of the character in that famous novel?"

"I cannot comprehend him, and yet I feel that he is engaged in some great undertaking."

"Have you spoken to the emperor about him lately?"

"I had a secret consultation with the emperor last night, and he urged me to become acquainted with the young stranger."

"With what object?" asked old Metcalfe.

"The secret societies are very active again, and he suspects that this wealthy young stranger is one of their principal agents, if not their leader."

At that moment a servant knocked at the door, and then a voice was heard through a speaking tube, saying:

"Mr. Hiram Woodford desires to see Mr. Metcalfe."

The old man hastened to the door and spoke to the servant outside, saying:

"Show Mr. Woodford up here at once."

A few minutes later the American entered the private office, when old Metcalfe introduced him to the Italian. Lorenzo held out his hand to the stranger, but the latter did not appear to see it, as he simply bowed on being thus introduced.

"Mr. Metcalfe, I called on you this evening on a little important business."

"Then I will retire," said Lorenzo, as he moved toward the door.

"It is not necessary, sir," said the American, "as our business is not of a private nature. I wish to inform Mr. Metcalfe that I have purchased some property in the city to-day, and I desire him to act as my agent to-morrow in paying for it."

"Where is the property?" inquired old Metcalfe.

The American described the locality where he had purchased a number of houses, and the two conspirators started and exchanged significant glances. It was the very property that they intended to purchase on the following day, and on which they were certain of realizing a fortune in a short time.

"I got a point about the property last night, and I hastened to purchase it, as I am assured that a new street will be cut through there very soon, which will enhance its value ten-fold."

"Are you certain about your information, sir?"

"Quite certain. In any case the property is worth what I am paying for it, and I am fortunate enough in having plenty of cash to spare."

A general conversation on the improvements in Paris then ensued, which lasted for about a quarter of an hour, when the American took his leave. When the two conspirators were left alone together, old Metcalfe actually tore his hair and raved like a madman. The Italian was also frantic, as he was just as avaricious as old Metcalfe, and he exclaimed:

"That fellow deserves to be sent to the secret prison of Toulon, and I will have him put out of the way before he is here much longer."

"You forget the emperor's orders, Lorenzo."

"To the fiends with the emperor's orders when we are being robbed in this way. I can hire a secret assassin, one of my own countrymen, for a few thousand francs, who will put a dagger in that rascally American's heart, and I will see about it this very night."

After leaving the house where old Metcalfe resided, Hiram Woodford entered a carriage awaiting him at the door, and his old negro companion accompanied him. As the carriage rolled

along to a certain saloon, the American addressed the old black man in familiar tones, saying:

"I have made a discovery, Jake."

"What is it, sir?"

"Lorenzo is interested in the real estate transactions with old Metcalfe. The blow I struck at the old rascal to-day will be felt by your enemy also."

"The information you give me suggests something, my dear Monte. If this hateful Lorenzo is so deeply interested in business transactions with the Metcalfes, would it not be well to impoverish him also before making him feel our full vengeance?"

"You are right, Jake. We will make them all feel poverty and degradation, captivity and hunger, before putting them to death as they deserve. This very night I will strike at young Metcalfe through his passion for gambling, as I feel certain that I have learned his tricks."

Hiram Woodford met Reuben Metcalfe at a private gambling saloon that night, and the two men engaged in a game for the first time. The American lost at first; but he continued to double the stakes until luck turned. Young Metcalfe became a little excited when he found that he was losing, and he increased the bets to a large amount, playing some sharp tricks at the same time. The American baffled him, however, without exposing the cheat, and Hiram Woodford arose from the table with over a hundred thousand dollars of the young rascal's money in his pocket, in checks and banknotes.

As the American was leaving the saloon to pass into his carriage he noticed a crouching figure standing near the doorway. The pretended old negro was in the act of opening the door for his master, and the American was stepping across the sidewalk, when the crouching figure sprang at him, drawing a dagger from under his cloak as he darted forward. Hiram Woodford had his eye on the fellow.

Springing aside on the instant to avoid the treacherous weapon, he dealt the assassin a blow on the side of the cheek that stretched him senseless on the pavement. Then, stooping down over the prostrate rascal, he raised him in his arms and flung him into the carriage, as he whispered to his companion:

"We will make something out of this rascal. Get in at once, before he regains his senses."

The man only waited to give a few quiet orders to the driver, and away through the streets rolled the carriage.

CHAPTER VII.—The Italian Assassin.

The carriage rolled on until it reached a street running parallel with that on which Young Monte Cristo dwelt. He then drove into a courtyard situated directly back from the small garden attached to the mysterious young stranger's residence. When the assassin opened his eyes again he found himself in a small, dark apartment, which had all the appearance of a dungeon, and which was entered by a heavy iron door. A dim lamp was burning in the corner of the dungeon, and the assassin could perceive, as he lay stretched on the floor, a tall white man and a small old negro standing over him.

He also noticed a large block in the corner of the dungeon, and on that block was a bright axe with a long handle. The assassin's arms were bound behind him, and when he attempted to raise himself from the ground he fell back again, as he inquired:

"Where am I?"

"You are in the dungeon of death, vile assassin. But before you meet your doom I want to ask you a few questions."

"What do you want to know?"

"Who hired you to assassinate me?"

"I will not tell you."

"Very well, then, you need not answer, as I know already. It was the villain who is known as Lorenzo, and he will soon share your fate."

"How did you know that?"

"That is nothing to you, wretch. As you will not answer my question, prepare to die, for you have but five minutes to live. Take, seize the axe and prepare the block."

The Italian assassin shuddered for a moment as he glared at the gleaming weapon and the black executioner, and he then walked quietly over and placed his head on the block as he exclaimed:

"Yes, I deserve death at your hand; but let it be over as quick as possible."

The disguised couple exchanged peculiar glances on thus beholding the assassin accepting death in such a cool manner, and the young man whispered to the other, saying:

"He is a brave fellow, and he may be of use to us hereafter."

The young woman nodded in approval, and then responded:

"Yes, we will be generous with him, and see how it will affect him."

The disguised man advanced and struck the fellow on the shoulder in a familiar manner, saying:

"We will not slay you, my friend. On the other hand, you are free to go where you please."

"You are but trifling with me, and I wish you would end the matter at once. It is true that I deserve death at your hands, and I do not ask your mercy. If I had slain you, you would have deserved it, but you are the conqueror now."

"Why did I deserve death at your hands?" demanded the disguised man.

"Because you are a traitor to Italy."

"Who accused me of being a traitor to Italy?"

"My leader."

"Who is your leader?"

The Italian hesitated for a few moments, and then replied:

"I cannot answer you."

"You need not answer me, as I know already. I did intend to set you free, but I have changed my mind, and I will keep you here for the present while I deal with your leader."

"If you do set me free, I swear that I will never strike at you again, as I cannot believe that one so generous could be a traitor."

The disguised man smiled a little at the effect that produced on the young Italian, and he said to himself:

"This fellow will serve me hereafter, but I must keep him in confinement for the present."

The dungeon was furnished with a good cot-

bed, and the disguised man released the prisoner's arms before he left him, saying:

"Do not imagine that I am your enemy, as I forgive you for the attempt made on me. Before I release you I will prove to you that your leader is a traitor, and that I am an honest man."

On the afternoon of the following day Lorenzo received a message in cipher, which read as follows:

"Come to me at nine this evening."

At the hour appointed the spy entered the palace of the emperor by a private door, and he was soon ushered into a private office, where the ambitious nephew of the great Napoleon received him. The Italian could see that there was a frown on Louis Napoleon's swarthy countenance when he entered, and the first words that fell from the monarch's lips were very ominous. Addressing the Italian in stern tones, he inquired:

"Did I not command you, sir, not to interfere with American citizens in any manner or form?"

"And did I not obey you, sire?"

"You did not. Last night a certain American met you at Metcalfe's house, when he informed you and your partner that he had made a purchase of some property during the day. Is it not true?"

"It is, sire."

"On leaving Metcalfe's house," continued the emperor, "the American proceeded to a certain saloon, where he won a sum of money from young Metcalfe. Is it not true?"

"I was so informed to-day, sire."

"Were you also informed that on leaving the saloon the American was assailed in the street by an Italian assassin armed with a dagger?"

"I did not hear about that, sire."

"You did hear about it, as you employed the man who attempted to slay the American. That man is known as Marco. He is one of your daughter's admirers, and he belongs to your club. You told him that the American was one of my secret agents, and that he had joined the Italian society in New York for the purpose of betraying their fellows in this city. You also gave Marco two thousand francs wherewith to fly from France if pursued by the police after the deed. Can you deny the truth?"

The Italian was silent, as he was at a loss what to say, and the emperor continued:

"You have been my servant, and I have paid you well for that service, but you must understand that you cannot disobey my orders. This American must not be molested again, as I swear to you that if anything like foul play happens to him I will have you arrested, and I will have all your property confiscated."

The Italian was in a fearful rage as he sneaked out of the palace by the private entrance. After glancing cautiously around on reaching the broad avenue outside the palace, the cunning traitor called a cab that was passing, and gave directions to the driver. He was dressed as a very old man at the time, and he felt assured that none of his countrymen could recognize him.

It was the first time that the spy had received a rebuke from his master, and he trembled with apprehension at incurring the anger of the emperor. When the cab was within a few blocks of his own residence the cunning spy got out and dismissed it. He then hastened to enter

his own house by an entrance at the rear, taking off his disguise as he passed through a dark, narrow passage. On reaching his private apartment he rang a bell, and when a servant girl appeared he said to her:

"Send my daughter to me at once."

"The young lady left the house while you were absent, sir, and she requested me to hand you this when you entered:

Lorenzo took a note and tore it open as he muttered to himself:

"Beatrice fled from me and with that wretch! May the fiends pursue the girl to her death!"

The servant girl drew back from the door on witnessing the rage of the deserted father, and when he calmed down a little she addressed him in timid tones, saying:

"A gentleman awaits you in the library, sir, and he says he wishes to see you on very important business."

"Tell the gentleman I will be down in a few minutes."

It was fully ten minutes after before Lorenzo entered the library to meet his visitor.

"You here, Mr. Woodford?"

"Yes, I am here, and I wish to have a very serious talk with you, sir."

"On what subject, sir?"

"On the subject of assassination."

"Assassination!" gasped the guilty traitor.

"What do you mean, sir?"

The American advanced a step and held up a dagger in his hand as he responded, saying:

"I took this from a man known as Marco last night, and I wish to see if you recognize it."

CHAPTER VIII.—Weaving the Web.

The treacherous Italian glared at the dagger—for a moment, and then turned his gaze on the American as he demanded:

"Why do you bring that dagger to me, sir?"

"Because I wished to see if you would recognize it as your own."

"But it is not mine."

"I assert that it is. It bears your initials on it, and I can prove that it was in your possession two days ago."

"Sir, I do not understand why you wish to seek a quarrel with me, but it is sufficient for me to know that you do so, and I am at your service."

"Now you are talking like a man, sir. I know that you sent an assassin after me, and I have punished that assassin in my own way. I now seek to punish you in my own way also, and I challenge you to combat."

"Then, of course," said Lorenzo, "I have the selection of weapons."

"Certainly, you have, and it does not matter to me what weapons you choose. Name your friend, and I will send my friend to him at once. You are willing that we should settle the affair in the morning?"

"Perfectly willing, sir," answered Lorenzo, with a bland smile, "as the sooner it is over the better."

The Italian then reflected a few moments, when he inquired:

"Do you know Mr. Reuben Metcalfe, sir?"

"I played with the person you mentioned last night, I believe, and that is all the acquaintance I have with him—up to the present."

"Young Mr. Metcalfe will act for me in the affair, and I presume you know his address?"

"I do, sir, and I think I know where I may find him this evening."

The blunt stranger had scarcely left the library when the vindictive spy touched a private bell, and then sprang out into the hallway to meet one of his underlings whom he had thus summoned.

"Follow the man who has just left here, and you will find a cab ready at the next corner. If I am not back here in an hour you will find me with old Metcalfe."

The men darted away, and the perplexed Italian returned to the library. Lorenzo then hastened to put on his disguise, and he stole out through the private entrance. While the leader of the spies was thus hastening to join his fellow conspirators, old Metcalfe and his worthy son were engaged in a very earnest conversation in their private office about the losses at gambling. Suddenly a warning bell rang, and the young man sprang to the door, saying:

"Who can this be?"

A servant appeared outside the door, and she answered, saying:

"Monsieur Lorenzo desires to see you at once on important business."

"Then show him up," said the old man.

The Italian was not disguised when he presented himself before Metcalfe and his son, saying:

"I am glad to see you together, as I have important news for you."

"What is your news, friend?"

"In the first place, tell me what you know about this man—this American—who calls himself Hiram Woodford?"

"I only know that he is a rich man, that he speculates in stocks and real estate, and that he has already cheated us out of half a million."

Lorenzo then went on to tell about his interview with the emperor and the visit of the American, while he continued, saying:

"The man who would defeat Reuben here at cards and escape Marco's dagger is to be feared if he is our private enemy."

"But why should he be our private enemy?" inquired the old man. "If he knows that you set Marco on him, I can understand why he should seek to be avenged on you, but I cannot understand how you can assume that we are implicated with him."

"The American must have noticed last night that I was interested in the real estate speculation with you. It is evident that he knows who set Marco on him. Before leaving the gambling saloon he won a large sum of money from Reuben here. As he is not a fool, it is evident that he suspects you also of bearing enmity toward him."

Father and son started a little at the blunt words thus uttered by the Italian, and the old man trembled a little as he rejoined, saying:

"He must be very keen if he sees as far as that, and he must be put out of the way, no matter what the emperor may say."

"Make your mind easy on that point, as I will put him out of the way in the morning. Reuben,

you will act for me, and I expect that his friend will be here to see you very soon."

The old man appeared to be terrified at the proposal, and he objected at once, saying:

"That will not do, Lorenzo. If Reuben acts as your second in the duel, would it not show at once that he is your intimate friend, and——"

"Bah!" interrupted the Italian. "The fool fights me with rapiers in the morning, and I will pierce his heart with the steel. Then what care we what the dead may surmise?"

That ominous speech silenced the others, and it was agreed that young Metcalfe should act for Lorenzo in the duel. Before the consultation was over the American's friend called to consult with young Metcalfe about arranging for the duel. That friend was Leon Bruner, who was one of the best-known journalists in Paris, and one who had often figured as principal on what is called "the field of honor." Somehow to the surprise of young Metcalfe, Leon Bruner did not offer the slightest objection in behalf of the American, to meet the famous Italian swordsman with the deadly rapier.

At daybreak on the following morning two carriages drove out from the city from different points, and they both halted at the end of a cemetery where Lorenzo's former victims were buried. One of the carriages contained Hiram Woodford, the journalist and the pretended black man. Lorenzo and young Metcalfe proceeded in the other, accompanied by a young surgeon.

After leaving their carriages, the duelists and their friends proceeded on foot to a very secluded spot close to the wall of the cemetery. The duelists were soon face to face, each holding a long rapier in his right hand. The word was given to set on, when the American drew back a few paces as if forgetting something, as he remarked:

"I forgot that I had this dagger about me, and it would not look well if found on me, should I be slain."

As the man spoke he put his hand up to the back of his neck and drew forth the dagger he had displayed to Lorenzo on the previous night. Handing it to the journalist, he remarked:

"Preserve that for me until this affair is over, and I may give you an item about it for your paper."

The two men then set on with apparent fury, and the devoted young woman who watched them held her breath. The rapiers appeared to be entwined together at the moment, and Lorenzo had already made two of his skillful thrusts. To his great surprise, however, the American parried them with apparent ease. Nerving himself for a final effort, and putting in force a trick never before baffled by one of his opponents, Lorenzo made a third thrust. A yell of pain and rage that was thrilling enough to arouse the ghosts in the neighboring burying ground then burst from the Italian, and he sprang back, dropping his rapier at the same time, while he clapped his hand to his right eye as he groaned forth:

"He has pierced me in the eye."

Reuben Metcalfe and the young surgeon sprang forward to assist the wounded man as he was falling on the ground and groaning aloud:

"Oh, this is cruel. I will never see out of this eye again."

Hiram Woodford was then turning away from the scene when he suddenly turned and continued, crying:

"Mr. Metcalfe, you will be pleased to remember that your friend swore last night that he would pierce me to the heart. Your father heard the threat also. When you play cards with me again I will insult you unless you change your style of playing."

CHAPTER IX.—A Mysterious Disappearance.

The affair created quite a sensation, as Lorenzo was well known for his skill at the rapier as well as his successful speculations. The American was well known also in certain circles, and all those with whom he had become acquainted were rejoiced at his success over the hitherto victorious Italian.

Young Metcalfe appeared at the gambling saloon that night, but the American was not present. As the hour of midnight approached without the American putting in an appearance, the young gambler made up his mind that Hiram Woodford would not appear on the scene again, and he became somewhat boisterous in his denunciation of the American. Addressing a circle of friends who had gathered around him at one of the tables, and speaking in loud tones, he cried:

"It may be the custom in America to win a large sum of money and then clear out, but I trust it will never prevail in our city. I now declare that the person calling himself Hiram Woodford promised to meet me to-night and give me my revenge. The hour of midnight has come, and he is not here."

"I am here in his place," answered a deep-toned voice that rang through the saloon.

The speaker was close to the young man's elbow, and he stared at him as he exclaimed:

"Count Monte Cristo, jr."

The young count bowed and continued in his deep tones, saying:

"At your service, sir. My friend, Mr. Hiram Woodford, finds it impossible to come here to-night, and he commissioned me to take his place. I have here in my possession the money he won from you the other night, and ten times as much more to back it, if necessary. I will play with you in my friend's name for any stakes you please."

Reuben Metcalfe was somewhat startled, indeed, on encountering the famous young count as a challenger in place of the American, and he could only bow in response at the time. It was impossible for him to decline the challenge if he had been so inclined, but a cold chill crept over him again as he followed the young count to the table, while he mentally exclaimed:

"In the name of perdition, what does this mean? The famous young Monte Cristo the American's friend! Is there a combination on foot to ruin us? Why did not the American come himself, or can it be that Lorenzo's tools have accomplished their work?"

The last supposition encouraged the young gambler, and he approached the table where the

young count was seated with haughty strides as he addressed him, saying:

"Sir, it is out of the usual course to send a substitute in such an affair, but I will not decline the challenge."

All the gamblers in the saloon felt a deep interest in the novel game, and they crowded around the table as if expecting that a strange scene would occur there. They all knew that young Metcalfe was an excellent player, and a very fortunate gambler. Young Metcalfe and his opponent did play for very high stakes and with varying fortunes. They played with varying success for about an hour, when the tide seemed to turn in favor of the young count, and in less than an hour after young Metcalfe arose from the table, crying:

"Luck is against me to-night, sir, but I will demand satisfaction on another occasion."

Young Monte Cristo then left the place with Leon Bruner and the young dandy, and Reuben Metcalfe fairly staggered to the sideboard to drink some wine as he groaned to himself, saying:

"Four hundred thousand francs more gone in one swoop!"

Old Metcalfe was furious when he heard of his son's loss, and he groaned forth:

"We are ruined, we are ruined!"

Lorenzo was announced at the moment, and father and son were much astonished at perceiving the wounded man entering the private office with a bandage over his right eye. The Italian was very much excited, and he at once exclaimed:

"Now I am in a terrible fix!"

"What is the matter, my friend?" inquired old Metcalfe.

"This infernal American has mysteriously disappeared, and I have just received a messenger from the emperor about him."

"What does the emperor say?" inquired the old man.

"He holds me accountable for the American, and he asserts that I will be arrested and punished if the man is not produced uninjured in the morning. What trouble to be in with all my suffering, and I know no more about the wretch than the emperor himself."

"Were not your spies on his track yesterday?" inquired young Metcalfe, with a doubtful smile.

"They were not. They could not find a trace of the rascal when he reached Paris after the duel. I believe the villain has disappeared for the sole purpose of getting me into trouble with the emperor."

Before the other could reply a private bell rang, and then a servant appeared at the door, saying:

"Count Monte Cristo, Jr., desires to see you, gentlemen, on important business."

CHAPTER X.—Striking at Tender Points.

The young count was close behind the servant girl when the announcement was made, and he entered the private office before its occupants could decline to see him.

"What is your business, count?" inquired old Metcalfe.

"It is simply this: My friend, Mr. Hiram Woodford, has disappeared in a mysterious manner. On the night before the duel he placed certain documents in my hand which give me the power to act as his agent in his business transactions should anything befall him."

"How does that concern us, sir?" inquired the old man.

"It does concern you all."

"In what way, Count?"

The first question was put by the Italian, who was feeling very uneasy in the presence of the young visitor.

"In this way, sir. My friend speculated on the Bourse through an agent. The agent informed me to-day that you gentlemen are short in your accounts with my friend. In justice to my friends and to his heirs, if he should be dead, I came here to request a settlement. I find that Metcalfe & Co. owe Mr. Hiram Woodford a little over a half million of francs."

The three conspirators turned pale while the young count was speaking. The old man was the first to recover his presence of mind, and he said to his visitor:

"Count Monte Cristo, it is true that we were engaged in certain speculations, but we were not aware that your friend speculated against us. Three days from hence we will be pleased to settle with you."

"I demand a settlement in the morning, sir," replied the young count in stern tones. "Such are the written instructions left me by my friend. Good-evening."

As the young man uttered the last words he turned and left the office in the most abrupt manner. The three conspirators stared at each other in amazement as they heard the visitor's footsteps moving down the stairs, and the old man closed the door of the private office as he gasped forth:

"We are ruined, as we cannot pay that large amount in the morning."

"We must see our way out of it," responded young Metcalfe, who possessed more courage and fortitude than the others. "Our credit is good yet, and we must borrow money to meet this demand made by the young count. You and father have been struck on tender points, but I have my dear wife yet, and I can make another fortune for her sake."

While the others were speaking old Metcalfe was pondering deeply, and he then remarked:

"Does it not appear very strange to you that this famous young count is connected with the infernal American?"

"It does appear strange," answered the young man, "as I never saw them together. It is very evident that the young count is not our friend, as he appeared delighted last night when he won from me, and it looked as if he was performing a labor of love in demanding a settlement with us just now."

The three conspirators then put their heads together and formed a plan for working against their mysterious enemy. While they were thus consulting, young Monte Cristo was driving along in his carriage with his faithful wife by his side. The young woman was then disguised as she appeared in the saloon in the garb of a young dandy on the previous night.

"And so everything moves on as you desire, dear Monte," remarked the young woman.

"We have been very successful so far, my dear," replied the young man, "but our work is not more than half accomplished yet, and we have great obstacles to contend against."

"You will not be too severe on young Metcalfe's wife, dear Monte?"

"I cannot spare her, as the young wretch adores her, and he must be punished through her."

"But will she not suffer herself, Monte?" pleaded the young woman. "Just imagine what her anguish will be if she ever loved you when she learns that you are alive still, and that you are rich and powerful, and that you are wedded to another."

The young man sighed and relented a little as he replied in calmer tones:

"I would I could spare her, but it cannot be. She is destined to be an instrument in our scheme of vengeance, as her husband must suffer all the pangs I can inflict on him, as her desertion of him will be worse than death."

"But have pity on the young woman, Monte."

"Do not talk to me of pity, my dear girl. What pity was shown to your poor father or to myself? It was intended to keep us in that living tomb while we lived, and these wretches were to be living in luxury here in Paris. Do not speak to me of pity until our work is accomplished, or I will falter and fall back."

The young couple were silent until they reached their own splendid residence, where they sat down to enjoy an excellent supper. When the meal was over, an old man, who appeared to be an Italian, entered the apartment and addressed the young count in confidential tones, saying:

"Lorenzo's spies are hunting the house again, count."

The young count looked up at the old fellow as if pleased at the intelligence, as he inquired:

"Are you certain of that, Marco?"

"I recognized three of them, count, as I passed in here five minutes ago. The fellows were employed by Lorenzo three days ago, and he regarded them as his ablest spies."

The spies were watching in front of the young count's mansion half an hour after when the happy couple drove away from Hiram Woodford's residence on the back street.

Young Mrs. Metcalfe was leading a very gay life in Paris at the time. On the night in question young Metcalfe and his wife attended a fancy ball at the opera house, the young woman appearing in the costume of a gypsy maiden. Reuben Metcalfe appeared in the garb of a gay cavalier. All the dancers wore masks, the ballroom was crowded, and several other young ladies appeared as gypsy maidens also. While the alert for his wife, Reuben Metcalfe did not dance, but he did indulge in champagne freely, and the more he drank the most suspicious and jealous he became. It was fully three o'clock in the morning when the half-crazed young man caught a glimpse of the young woman. She was seated in a retired alcove at the time, and her mask was down. A handsome man of thirty wearing a full brown beard, and who was dressed in the garb of an English sailor, was seated close to the young wife.

Stealing as close to the pair as possible, Reuben Metcalfe listened to their conversation for a few moments. He then suddenly burst out before them, his eyes gleaming in the wildest manner, as he addressed his wife, crying in hoarse tones:

"You perjured wretch, I have caught you at last, and I will have your life!"

As the wretch spoke he aimed a fierce blow at the young woman's face, but the knuckles barely touched her flushing cheek when the sailor dealt him a stunning thump on the side of the head that stretched him flat on the floor. When Reuben Metcalfe recovered his senses again his young wife and her companion had disappeared.

CHAPTER XI.—Another Cruel Blow.

On the following evening old Metcalfe and his son were seated in the private office, and the young man's face was pale and haggard, while his eyes were red and fiery.

"The last blow has broken my heart," groaned the young wretch, "but I cannot yet believe that she has deserted me."

"But you say that your hand did not touch her, Reuben?"

A private door at the side of the apartment was flung open on the instant, and out on the floor sprang the young wife, exclaiming:

"It is a base lie on his part, as the wretch did strike me. See the mark on my cheek now."

Reuben Metcalfe quailed before the gaze of the enraged woman, while the old man advanced to soothe her, saying:

"My dear daughter, you must make some allowance for Reuben, as he was very much excited last night."

"I have suspected for some time past that you were both vile wretches, but I am certain of it now."

"What do you mean, Pauline?" demanded the young man, as he quailed before the fiery glances bent on him.

"I mean that I have discovered that you were both infamous wretches, and that you, Reuben Metcalfe, deserve the most terrible punishment that can be inflicted on a human fiend!"

"Explain yourself," gasped the young man.

"I will. I have discovered beyond all doubt that Conrad Picardo did not perish in the storm on that dreadful morning. I have discovered that he was betrayed by you to a living death in that fearful prison, because he merely sympathized with a young girl whose father was an innocent convict working in the galleys."

"It is a lie!" gasped Reuben.

"It is not a lie," continued the young woman in wrathful tones. "You and your father were secret spies at the time, and you betrayed my beloved one by a false accusation. He was seized that morning when he escaped, after his boat was upset, by swimming to the prison. The governor met him on the shore and enticed him in under the pretense of giving him nourishment. He was then placed in solitary confinement, and he perished about a year after while making a desperate attempt at escape, in company with an old convict who was known as Captain Borgia."

"This is but an excuse to fly with the wretch whom I detected you with last night," exclaimed Reuben.

"It is true that I am going with the wretch, as you call him, whom you saw me with last night, but he is not my lover."

"That is a lie!" hissed the jealous young husband, "as I saw his arm around your waist, and he kissed you at the same time."

"Has not a brother a right to kiss a sister after an absence of ten years? Oh, fool, fool, if you did but have patience and common sense you would not have me deserting you, as I will."

"That sailor your brother?" gasped Reuben Metcalfe. "It is a cheat."

"It is not a cheat, you jealous fool. Do you not remember that my brother sailed away to India ten years ago?"

The young wretch pondered a moment or so and then replied:

"I do remember now, but he perished at sea."

"He did not perish at sea, wretch, as he is here in the city now to protect me from such a fiend as you are. He was rescued at sea by Chinese pirates, and kept in bondage until a year ago. He sought me at Toulon, and he then came on here to Paris in search of me. It was by the merest accident that I met him at the ball last night, but I am delighted to think that he struck you to the earth, base traitor that you are."

As the young woman uttered the last words she turned to the private door as if about to take her leave, when her husband sprang forward again to seize her, crying in passionate tones:

"Pauline, Pauline, you are my wife, and you must not desert me. Remain here and I will explain all to you, my beloved wife. Oh, it will be worse than death to me if you desert me."

"Then suffer worse than death," cried the young woman, "as I never live another hour under your roof."

She then darted toward the private door, when the young man sprang to intercept her, raising his right hand as he cried:

"I will kill you ere I permit you to fly from me."

The blow fell on the young woman's head, and she staggered back under it as she exclaimed:

"Another cruel blow, you wretch!"

The private door was burst in at the moment, and in sprang the sailor with a horsewhip in his hand, as he cried:

"Unmanly dog! How dare you strike a woman, and that woman my beloved sister? Take that, you miserable cur, and that, and that."

As the sailor spoke he seized Reuben Metcalfe by the collar of his coat and lashed away on his back in a fearful manner. So fierce were the blows delivered by the stalwart sailor that his victim groaned for mercy, while the old man sprang desperately at the assailant, crying:

"Help! Help! He will murder my son before my very eyes—the fiend!"

The sailor cast one more defiant glance at old Metcalfe and then retreated to the private door, crying:

"You will hear from me again, as I have sworn to avenge my little playmate, Conrad Picardo. Reuben Metcalfe, you will never see your beloved wife again, as she will never again live with such a treacherous spy."

The door was scarcely closed on the sailor when Lorenzo rushed into the private office, crying:

"What is all this uproar about here?"

Pointing to the private door, the old man replied:

"A fiend of a sailor has nearly murdered my dear son, and he has taken away his wife."

Old Lorenzo glared at the old man and then at his son, who was groaning on the floor in the corner, as he inquired:

"What sailor are you talking about?"

The old man dragged the Italian to the window in an impulsive manner, and pointing through the blind he inquired:

"Do you see that sailor who is handing my son's wife into the cab?"

"Yes, I see him."

"Then beware of him, for he is our secret enemy, and he knows all about Captain Borgia and the young fisherman of Toulon."

The Italian glared after the cab as it rolled away with the sailor and the young woman before he turned to old Metcalfe and whispered into his ear, saying:

"I have made another discovery."

"What is it?"

"The young man known as Monte Cristo, Jr., is working against us also. We are beset by a powerful enemy, and that sailor must be only a tool. Let us crush this young Monte Cristo and then we will be safe."

CHAPTER XII.—Plotting Against Young Monte Cristo.

Young Metcalfe was so enraged and in such pain after the drubbing he had received from the hands of the stalwart sailor that he could not utter a word for some time. After swallowing some bumpers of wine, young Metcalfe was more inclined to listen to Lorenzo, who was endeavoring to prove to the old man that the young man calling himself Monte Cristo, Jr., was at the bottom of all their disasters. None of them thought of connecting the former fisher-boy with any of their enemies until the sailor calling himself Walter Faber appeared on the scene. After reflecting for some moments, the Italian inquired:

"Did your wife have a brother who was supposed to have been lost at sea years ago?"

"She did," answered the young man.

"Could you trace any resemblance to him in the rascally sailor who assaulted you?"

"Yes; the voice sounded familiar, and Walter Faber would be about the age of the wretch if he lived until now. Oh, I will cut him to pieces for the outrage he committed on me, even though I never speak to my wife again. I feel that she has deserted me forever, but I will be avenged on those who have betrayed us."

The cunning Italian felt that they had a clue to their private enemies at last, more especially as he had received information about young Monte Cristo which he had not yet exposed to the others. Through one of his secret agents Lorenzo had discovered that the young man who had stolen his daughter, and who was known

as Marco the brigand, was seen entering the magnificent mansion occupied by young Monte Cristo. He was also informed that his beautiful daughter, whom he had loved so dearly, had resided in the same residence since she had escaped from her father's house. On informing the Metcalfes of the suspicious facts, the old man remarked:

"Can it be possible that this young Monte Cristo is connected in some way with Count Borgia's family? He had a daughter, as you know, as you saw her at Toulon. She disappeared then, and she has not since been heard from."

"Was she wealthy?" inquired old Metcalfe.

"Yes, she had some means in Italy left her by her father. He had also diamonds and jewels in the family, which had disappeared some time before his death."

"What became of those diamonds?" inquired the old man, with sparkling eyes.

The Italian pondered some moments ere he replied, saying:

"Count Borgia was supposed to have made off with those diamonds before he got into trouble in Italy. I was his intimate friend here in France, yet I could not tell or find out where they were placed."

"Who comes here now?" inquired old Metcalfe, who was peering out of the window.

"It is a gentleman in the garb of a sailor," answered his son, "and he is coming in here."

A servant soon after opened the door of the private office and announced the stranger, saying:

"A gentleman to see you, Mr. Metcalfe, on very important business."

The stranger was a man somewhat below medium height, and who appeared to be over thirty years of age. He was dressed in the garb of an officer in the French navy, and he wore a full black beard and a pair of dark eyeglasses. Addressing young Metcalfe in stiff tones, the visitor said:

"I am Lieutenant Furber, of the French navy, and I come from my friend, Walter Faber."

"Why do you come from him, sir?" demanded young Metcalfe in stiff tones.

"Because he imagines that you would be ready and eager to resent the blows he gave you a short time since."

"I will fight the wretch," cried the young man, as he shook his father off and advanced to speak to the sailor. "My friend here will settle matters with you, and I declare that the duel will be to the death."

"To the death it will be," answered the stranger, as he turned to Lorenzo. "Now, sir, will settle for an early meeting in another apartment."

"I will fight your friend, sir, and as soon as possible at that. Settle with my friend Lorenzo as to the terms, but I would prefer pistols."

"You are the challenged party," answered the stranger, "and pistols will be the weapons."

The sailor and Lorenzo then adjourned to another apartment, where they agreed that the duel would be fought with pistols on the following morning. It was also agreed that the affair should come off on the spot where Lorenzo had lost his eye. When the sailor retired from the house, old Metcalfe groaned in agony, saying:

"Yes, yes, our private enemies are striking at us on all sides, and I will receive a challenge next. The next thing we will hear is that we are banished from France and sent out on the world as beggars. Oh, if we could only strike at our foes before they crush us altogether."

"We will strike at them, sir," answered his son in brave tones. "I will seek this young Monte Cristo to-night, and I will force him into a duel on the slightest suspicion that he is engaged with our enemy."

The famous young Monte Cristo was seen in the public streets of Paris that evening in company with his black attendant. About eight o'clock that night he received a visit from Lorenzo and young Metcalfe at his mansion. The young count received them alone in his private apartment, and cold and haughty were his tones as he addressed young Metcalfe, saying:

"Did you come for your revenge, sir?"

"I came for revenge at cards, and for information also, sir," was the answer.

"What information do you require from me?"

"I desire to know if you know a person calling himself Walter Faber?"

"I do not," was young Monte Cristo's prompt answer.

"Do you know Lieutenant Furber of the navy, sir?"

"I do not."

Young Metcalfe bowed and stepped back a few steps, when Lorenzo advanced and addressed the young count in stern tones, as he demanded:

"Is not my daughter Beatrice visiting your house at present, sir?"

"I decline to answer."

A fierce frown appeared on the Italian's face, and he cried:

"Then I denounce you for harboring my runaway child and for giving succor to the wretch who had stolen her from me."

"Do you allude to Marco the Brigand?"

"Yes, I do."

"Are you aware that he is your daughter's husband?"

"That is not true! My daughter would not disgrace herself by wedding a brigand."

"Marco the Brigand was employed by you to assassinate my American friend."

"It is an infamous lie, sir, and I will call you to account for it."

"I can prove it."

The young count clapped his hands on the instant, and two forms appeared before him from the back room.

"My daughter and Marco!" gasped Lorenzo.

The young girl advanced on the instant and confronted her father as she cried:

"It is true, miserable father. I heard you sending Marco here to slay the American gentleman, and I then vowed that I would never live another night under your roof."

CHAPTER XIII.—The Conspirators Surprised Again.

While the young girl was thus unbraiding her father, Monte Cristo, Jr., slipped suddenly out of the apartment. His disappearance was scarcely noticed by Lorenzo and young Metcalfe

when Hiram Woodford, the American merchant, appeared suddenly before them.

"I understand that you were seeking me throughout the city?"

"Yes—I—I—was seeking you."

"What for, sir?"

"To demand another fight with you."

"I decline to fight again with the person who employs assassins."

"You are an infamous liar, and I demand the satisfaction you promised me. That wretch dare not come forward in public and assert that I employed him in the work of assassination."

"But he has done so," coolly remarked the American, "and your daughter here has confirmed his evidence before the emperor himself."

"Before the emperor himself!" gasped Lorenzo.

"I was compelled to, sir. This gentleman spared Marco's life, and I love Marco. You sought to put the gentleman to death from private enmity, and you told Marco an infamous lie to set him on the deed. I am your daughter, but I could not swear to a lie when summoned before the stern emperor. I will now bid you adieu forever."

As Beatrice uttered the last words she took Marco by the hand and turned to leave the room with him.

"Where are you going, girl?"

"I am going to Spain or Italy with my husband, and by order of the emperor."

"Then that infamous Marco is your husband?"

"He is my husband," replied the girl, in proud tones, "and I know that he will be a noble man yet."

Marco then retreated from the room, taking his wife with him. Lorenzo stared at the closed door through which they retreated. It was terrible to witness the rage of the Italian.

Young Metcalfe had watched the scene with intense interest and excitement, but he had wisdom enough to curb his companion at the moment by putting his hand on his arm and whispering into his ear, saying:

"This man must be under the protection of the emperor, and it would be fatal to you if you publicly assail him."

"True, true, Reuben. We must meet the wretch in another way. If he were the emperor's brother I will have his life ere long."

"Will you fight me?" demanded Metcalfe of the American.

"I believe you have one duel on hand already, sir, and I do deny that you are a gentleman, if Walter Faber speaks the truth, and I believe he does."

"What do you know about Walter Faber and his accusations against me, sir?"

"I know Walter Faber to be an honorable young man, and I know that he denounces you for vile treachery against the young friend of your boyhood. That young friend died through your treachery, so Faber asserts, and I believe him, and he has taken vengeance in his hand. Therefore I will not interfere with him until you prove that you are not a spy and a traitor."

As the man spoke he darted back and left the room, while Metcalfe turned to Lorenzo, saying:

"You see all three of them are acting together,

and Monte Cristo denied that he was acquainted with Walter Faber."

Before the Italian could reply the stalwart young sailor sprang into the room, crying:

"Who wants me here?"

The two conspirators were so excited at the moment that they did not notice the lights in the apartment growing darker, and Metcalfe addressed the sailor in haughty tones, saying:

"Sir, you have dared to accuse me of treachery against a young friend at Toulon, and now I demand your proof to sustain the accusation."

"You shall have it," was the prompt answer from the sailor, "and I call on the ghost of the dead to portray the actual treachery on the beach at Toulon."

The words were spoken in thrilling tones, and they were scarcely uttered when the side of the apartment was withdrawn, as it were, and a moving panorama appeared. An exclamation of consternation burst from young Metcalfe as he recognized the scene. There was the old boathouse on the beach, and two young figures standing near it. The young figures presented almost living likenesses of Conrad Picardo and Celia Borgia as they appeared on that eventful evening years before. The two figures then appeared to move on, and the old boathouse moved with them, when another figure was observed stealing forth from the hiding-place, and watching the young people as they retreated. An exclamation of surprise escaped from the Italian as he recognized the third figure, which presented a living likeness of Reuben Metcalfe at the time when he was acting as a spy in his father's tavern.

"Is that proof enough?" demanded the stalwart sailor as the scene disappeared and the lights sprang up again.

There was no reply from either of the conspirators, as Reuben Metcalfe had fallen on the floor in a swoon, and Lorenzo was bending over him.

When he recovered the sailor had disappeared and young Monte Cristo stood before them. Reuben Metcalfe then said:

"Come away and let us find my father. We will talk it over then."

The two rascals beat a retreat to the old man's residence, where they found him in the most intense agony. Then old Metcalfe told them the chief of police had been there and ordered all three of them to leave Paris within two hours. So arrangements were made, and father and son were soon on their way to Spain, Lorenzo leaving in another direction. On reaching Madrid old Metcalfe turned all his drafts into gold. Then he hired a beautiful residence in the suburbs.

One evening as Reuben was strolling along with a Spanish maiden he was confronted by the sailor Walter Faber, who demanded Reuben fulfill his promise to him. Reuben Metcalfe sprang at Faber crying:

"I will have your life, you dog!"

The young sailor knocked him down, and four masked men seized Reuben and led him away through a grove, and then he saw the Spanish girl walking after them with the stalwart sailor, and exclaimed:

"Mercy on me, it is the Italian girl herself."

CHAPTER XIV.—The Greatest Blow of All.

On that same evening old Metcalfe was reclining in his easy chair in the villa when a visitor was announced. Expecting to meet a merchant from Madrid, who was to call on some business, the old wretch told the servant to show the visitor in. An old man with white hair and a flowing beard, and wearing green spectacles, was then ushered into the sitting room.

"Well, sir, who are you and what do you want with me?" demanded old Metcalfe.

"I came to you from a friend you knew in Paris, sir."

"From a friend in Paris," gasped old Metcalfe, in terrified tones. "I have no friends in Paris."

"You had one, sir, who sent me to you now, and who is known as Lorenzo."

"Lorenzo!" exclaimed the guilty old wretch. "No, no, I do not know the man."

"My friend Lorenzo asserts that you were his agent in France for years, that he heaped favors on you, and that he helped to make a large fortune for you."

"The wretch you speak of is an impostor, as no Italian heaped favors on me in France."

"It is an infernal lie," growled old Metcalfe.

"And defy me to my face, you infamous old villain, as I am Lorenzo himself," said the stranger.

"Every franc you have I will take from you, and you will be a beggar and starve. Seize him, my men, and away with him."

Five men sprang in through the windows, and they were all wearing masks similar to those on the faces of the fellows who had seized Reuben Metcalfe. Before the trembling old man could well comprehend what they were doing, the masked men dragged him out on the path in front of his house, and then bore him away to the grove. On reaching the shelter of the grove a bandage was placed on the eyes of the prisoner, and he was then flung into a covered conveyance.

After traveling for over an hour the vehicle was pulled up at the foot of a mountain, and the wretched prisoner was dragged up a steep, narrow path by his captors. After ascending for some time the wretched old man heard a familiar voice behind him crying:

"Into the cave with him now, and then we will see about bringing him to terms."

Old Metcalfe was then led into a large cave, the door of which was guarded by four armed men, and the bandage was removed from his eyes. One glance around told the old miser that he was in a den of outlaws, as several masked men stood around, while arms of various kinds hung from the walls.

"Into the inner cave with him," cried the familiar voice as Lorenzo, wearing a mask also, pointed to a door at the end of the large apartment.

Before reaching that apartment the gag was taken from the old prisoner's mouth, while Lorenzo cried:

"Leave him to me now."

After regarding the old wretch for some moments with looks of hatred, the Italian spoke in his natural tones, saying:

"You base, infamous old traitor, do you know what I brought you here for?"

"To murder me, I suppose," was the trembling answer.

"No, but to drag the gold from you that is now hoarded with your banker in Madrid."

The old man groaned and then inquired:

"Are you not the leader of the brigands here?"

"No, but I am second in command. You treacherously betrayed me before I left Paris, and——"

"It is not the truth, Lorenzo, I swear," interrupted the old man.

"It is the truth, you infamous old wretch. You betrayed me in Paris to the emperor, who gave me in charge to that vile American, who dragged me through France, scourging me at times as they would a galley slave, and who sent me wandering through the mountains of Spain until I joined the outlaws."

"Can I see the chief?"

"Yes, you can see me," answered a hoarse voice, as a tall man wearing a mask and a gaudy dress entered the apartment from a side door.

"What will you take to ransom my son?"

"I will tell you," answered the chief of the brigands. "Give me back the friend whom you and your son betrayed to death years ago in Toulon."

"Good captain, to whom do you allude?"

"I allude to Conrad Picardo, the fisherman of Toulon," was the stern reply.

As the leader of the outlaws uttered the last words he flung off the mask and Lorenzo started back, exclaiming:

"Great heavens, it is the sailor who called himself Walter Faber. I never saw your face before, and is it possible that you are the famous leader of the outlaws?"

"Yes, I am, and your deadly enemy, you vile Italian wretch. You thought you were dragging that old man here to rob him, when I set you on him for a purpose of my own. He is an infamous old dog, but you are a perfect fiend. He will receive punishment, but you will receive ten times more, as I know that you betrayed your intimate friend and preserver to a living death."

Lorenzo fairly staggered back as the charges were hurled against him, and as he concluded his denunciation the Spanish girl sprang out from the other apartment and embraced her husband, the leader of the outlaws, before she turned to glare fiercely at Lorenzo, crying:

"Base, vile, infamous traitor, I am Celia Borgia, and I am here now to avenge my father!"

"This is the greatest blow of all," Lorenzo groaned to himself; "but I must muster all my courage and make a final struggle for life and liberty."

"I wish to tell you," said the pretended sailor, "that my friend, the brave American, sent me word that he would bring you through France into the mountains here. From the moment you arrived in Spain my eye was on you, and it was I who induced you to join this band. You never saw my face until to-night, but it was I who led you on to attack your old friend here, so that we could pounce on you when you were gloating at the idea of robbing the old wretch of his ill-gotten wealth."

CHAPTER XV.—The Trial.

While the stalwart sailor was denouncing the treacherous spies about a dozen of the masked outlaws ranged themselves near the prisoners, as

ready to pounce on them if they made the least resistance. Reuben Metcalfe was the only one of the trio who displayed the natural courage of a brave man. While the young man could never forget his lost wife, he was becoming very much attached to the young Spanish beauty when his dream of happiness was so rudely interrupted by the fearful nightmare that had burst on him. All through the scene this young man kept his eyes glaring at the young Italian woman, as he kept asking himself:

"Can it be possible that it is the young girl I saw in Toulon that evening? Can it be that we have been betrayed and ruined through the medium of the old convict's daughter? Could I be such a fool as not to recognize her as she beguiled me with words of love? It seems incredulous."

And while thus muttering and pondering, Reuben Metcalfe felt more mortification than fear at the thought that he had lost his beloved wife and his second love through the instrumentality of the stalwart sailor who claimed to be his brother-in-law. The pretended sailor now ordered the masked men to seize the prisoners, which they did, disarming Lorenzo and binding his arms at the same time. The other prisoners were already secured in the most effective manner.

"On with the trial!" cried the pretended sailor.

Celia at once stepped forward and confronted Lorenzo, crying:

"I accuse this wretch of having betrayed my father by falsely charging him with a crime against the Emperor of France."

"I deny the charge," answered Lorenzo, in brazen tones, "and I demand the proof against me, even though I am in the hands of outlaws."

"Base wretch, can you dare deny that you denounced my father to the French emperor, and that you accused him of conspiring to assassinate Louis Napoleon?"

"I deny it," answered Lorenzo.

"You cannot deny it," cried a blunt voice, as Hiram Woodford, the American, stepped in on the scene.

Lorenzo cast one glance around at the masked men, and then faced his accuser, saying:

"This is a farce, as I know that I am doomed without this form of trial."

"You are doomed because you are guilty," replied the American. "You cannot deny that I heard the Emperor of the French accuse you, in your own house, of having denounced Captain Borgia to him. Bah! Why waste time with such a wretch as you?"

The American then bowed to the young woman and retired, saying:

"Call on me again if you need me."

Celia Borgia then addressed young Metcalfe, saying:

"Reuben Metcalfe, do you dare deny that you betrayed and denounced your young friend, Conrad Picardo, when he gave me his sympathy that evening on the beach at Toulon?"

"I do deny it," was the bold answer.

"Then why did you faint on beholding a certain scene in the house of the young Count Monte Cristo in Paris?"

"I did not faint at the scene."

"You did, you did," cried Lorenzo with a malicious smile. "Base young wretch, you and your

father both acted as spies at the time, and I now denounce you."

The stalwart young sailor had appeared on the scene again, and he then cried in joyous tones:

"Then you admit that they were your spies, Lorenzo?"

"Yes, I do. I was a secret agent for the French government, and those wretches were my tools. That old wretch there refused to aid me when I appealed to him to-night, and I now denounce him."

"Then the Metcalfes did betray the young fisherman known as Conrad Picardo?" continued the pretended sailor in joyous tones.

"Yes, they did."

"Enough, enough," cried the pretended sailor, "you are all guilty, and you will all suffer as you deserve."

At a motion from their leader, the masked men secured each of the prisoners to iron rings at the side of the cave, and they then filed out of the apartment, leaving the victims alone with their principal accusers. The disguised young count took his wife by the hand and led her in front of the prisoners, and he pointed at Lorenzo, saying:

"Celia Borgia, what punishment do you claim on the wretch who betrayed your father?"

"Death in life," was the stern answer.

"The sentence will be carried out," continued the pretended sailor. "Lorenzo, you will be confined here in a dark dungeon for six months, where you will feel all the agonies you inflicted on your old friend. Then you will be sent forth as a helpless idiot, as you will be drugged so that you will be deprived of your senses."

The Italian shuddered as he realized the terrible doom thus inflicted on him, and he gasped forth:

"Mercy! Mercy!"

The vengeful young woman cast one scornful glance on him, as she replied:

"Yes, we will show you the mercy that you bestowed on my noble father."

She then pointed at old Metcalfe, as she addressed her husband and inquired:

"What will we do with the old wretch who betrayed your young friend and who robbed those who intrusted their money to him at Paris?"

"We will give him a taste of starvation for a while, until he gives up all his gold, and then we will send him back to Toulon as a wretched beggar."

The old man was about to appeal when his son thundered forth:

"Silence, father, as you cannot expect any mercy from such fiends as these."

The sailor then turned on Reuben Metcalfe with flashing eyes as he addressed him in thrilling tones, crying:

"Why did you not challenge Conrad Picardo when he was a rival of yours for the love of Pauline Faber?"

"Would that I had done so. Were he alive to-day, or could he come from his grave in the sea, I would defy him to mortal combat."

The words were scarcely uttered when the lights in the cave went out suddenly, and all was as dark as pitch. Then out rang a voice that sounded dreadfully familiar to the ears of old Metcalfe and his son, as it cried:

"Then up from the grave at the bottom of the

sea I come to accept that challenge, Reuben Metcalfe. Are you prepared to fight me living or dead, Reuben Metcalfe?"

The young man thus addressed was dumfounded at the turn of affairs when the familiar voice rang out on his ears in the darkness, but he soon mustered all his courage as he said:

"Fools, you cannot terrify me by such tricks. Conrad Picardo is sleeping at the bottom of the sea, and I defy him living or dead. If he is alive, I will encounter him as man to man, and let him avenge himself on me, if he is able, for having stolen his promised bride. As he is dead, I defy his spirit."

"Then what weapons do you choose against me?" demanded the voice through the darkness.

"Swords or pistols, I care not which," cried the desperate young prisoner.

The voice of the prisoner was scarcely hushed when unseen hands were laid on him, and he felt that he was being released from the words that bound him. The unseen hands then drew him forth into the middle of the cave, and a sword was placed in his hand, while a voice whispered into his ear, saying:

"Now strike for your life, and your opponent will be the young fisherman of Toulon."

Up flashed the lights again, while the voice of the young Italian woman rang out, crying:

"Reuben Metcalfe, behold in your opponent the ghost of your victim."

Young Metcalfe stared fearfully at the form before him for a moment, and then a cry of terror burst from his lips as he staggered back, exclaiming:

"It is Conrad Picardo himself!"

CHAPTER XVI.—The Last Surprise.

Conrad Picardo did appear before his betrayers in garments exactly similar to those worn by him on that eventful night in Toulon. He had the same youthful face, also the same light, merry step, and the same jaunty air, as he advanced toward his former rival, crying:

"Reuben Metcalfe, I accept your challenge, and I am here to fight in my own behalf."

Reuben Metcalfe flung his weapon on the ground and stepped back with a shudder, as he gasped forth:

"I will not fight with the dead."

"I am mortal, you treacherous hound!" he cried. "I would have you know, wretches all, that I did not perish in the sea at Toulon when I attempted to escape with the noble Count Borgia that night, as reported."

"Mercy on me," cried Lorenzo, as he gazed around. "And did the count survive also?"

"I regret to say that he did not, you infamous villain," responded the young fisherman. "Your noble victim perished almost in my arms that night, but I lived to avenge him."

"Are you not really dead?" gasped Reuben Metcalfe, as he advanced a step or two to stare at the well-known countenance.

The young fisherman sprang suddenly forward and dealt the young scoundrel a smart blow in the face as he replied:

"That does not feel like the hand of the dead. Now, grasp your sword and defend your life, as I will not show you any mercy."

The blow staggered Reuben Metcalfe, but it aroused him to fury also. Stooping down to seize the sword, he glared at the young fisherman as he cried in fierce tones:

"Now I know that you are living, Conrad Picardo, and I will fight you to the death if I receive fair play."

"You will receive fair play," answered his old companion, "and you can depart hence in peace if you are successful in the encounter."

Mustering all his strength and courage, Reuben Metcalfe struck at his former friend with all the fury of his nature as he cried:

"I hated you from childhood, and I now know that you are the cause of my late downfall."

Old Metcalfe and Lorenzo watched the struggle with intense interest, as they were both aware that Reuben was an excellent swordsman, and they could not imagine that the rough young fisherman had any experience with the weapon. Great was their surprise, however, when they perceived that the young fisherman played with his opponent in the most masterly manner, and old Metcalfe gasped forth:

"My dear Reuben will be slain!"

A cry of agony escaped from the son at the moment, which was followed by another an instant later. Reuben then dropped the weapon on the floor and staggered back, with his hands clasped to his eyes, as he gasped forth:

"The wretch has pierced me in the eyes. Mercy, mercy, I will be blind forever."

Reuben Metcalfe sank on the floor groaning in agony, while his father gasped forth:

"Oh, Reuben, Reuben, it is terrible that you are thus punished. They will blind me next, and——"

"Silence!" thundered the young fisherman, as two of the masked men sprang in and raised the wounded man from the floor. "Give the wretch a stimulant, as I have something to say to him before we part forever."

A bandage was placed on the eyes of the wounded man, and some brandy was given him at the same time.

"Listen to me now!" cried the young fisherman, as he advanced with his wife and confronted the other prisoners.

A deep silence prevailed over the cave for a moment, and the young man continued in thrilling tones, saying:

"I will not speak of the sufferings I endured when in prison in company with the noble Count Borgia, but I tell you that I escaped on that night when he lost his life in the attempt. With the assistance of his brave daughter here I reached the headland below Toulon, and then we both planned to avenge ourselves on the infamous wretches who had betrayed her father and myself. Before leaving the prison, Count Borgia confided to me the secret concerning the hiding-place of the diamonds of the Borgias, most of which were concealed in a cave on the coast of Corsica. We went to Corsica together, and we found the diamonds. Then we laid our plans anew for our life of vengeance. We left Corsica and came here to Spain, where we were united as man and wife. After that we traveled in various countries, having disposed of some of the diamonds. While thus traveling my dear wife educated me and trained me to become what is called a gentleman. We also stud-

ied the languages of different nations for reasons that you will see explained hereafter.

"Having acquired experience and skill in the use of arms, in the meantime, and having enlisted a band of faithful followers to serve our purpose, we set out for Paris to commence our work against the dastardly enemies, who deserved a terrible punishment."

The young man motioned to one of his followers at the moment, while he flung off the outer garments of a fisherman before those who were able to perceive him. He then arrayed himself in other garments and disguises in the most rapid manner possible, while Lorenzo and old Metcalfe stared at him in astonishment. When properly arrayed the brilliant young man addressed old Metcalfe, crying:

"Who am I now, old man?"

"You are the young gentleman who was known in Paris as Count Monte Cristo, Jr."

The young woman had slipped out of the apartment while her husband was changing his costume, and she then appeared at his side again disguised as his black attendant, while she cried in her natural tones:

"Base Lorenzo, you often saw me in this guise in Paris, but you did not dream that I was Cecil Borgia."

Lorenzo was gazing at the young woman, as he gasped:

"It is astounding!"

"We entered Paris as you see us now, and we at once commenced operations against you wretches. With the diamonds of the Borgias at our command we were able to procure funds enough to live in princely style, and to operate on the Exchange also. We did operate against you wretches, and we succeeded in ruining each and all of you. In order to accomplish our purpose it was necessary to get the aid of a clever American gentleman, and we soon discovered the man we needed."

While the young man was thus speaking one of the masked men assisted him in changing his appearance again, and he then appeared before the two prisoners as Hiram Woodford, the American. More exclamations of surprise and astonishment burst from Lorenzo and Old Metcalfe, the latter exclaiming:

"Oh, Reuben, Reuben, young Picardo is no other than the American also."

"I have more to say to you," cried the young fisherman. "You will now perceive that our plans were well laid, but you have more to learn. It was not enough to deprive you of your wealth, but we were determined to ruin and disgrace you also. As Hiram Woodford, an honored American citizen, I sought acquaintance with Louis Napoleon, and I proved to him that you were infamous wretches as assassins. Then you know how you were banished from France. You may not know, however, that I was the person who horsewhipped Reuben Metcalfe in his own father's house, taking his beloved wife away from him at the same time, but I will prove to that I am."

The young fisherman made another rapid change in his appearance, and in an incredibly short space of time he appeared before the guilty wretches as the stalwart young sailor.

"Who am I now?" he demanded of old Metcalfe.

"The sailor who insulted my son," gasped forth the old man. "Oh, Reuben, Reuben, it is not your brother-in-law at all, but Conrad Picardo, who beat you so unmerciful before my eyes."

A fearful groan escaped from the blind man, and he gasped forth:

"My cup is full, and I can bear no more."

The unfortunate wretch then fell into a swoon, and the two masked men stretched him on the floor.

The young man then turned on old Metcalfe, saying:

"In the morning you will leave this cave in company with your son, and you will be back to Toulon. If you refuse to give up the gold now in the hands of your banker in Madrid you will be starved to death in this place."

"Mercy," groaned the old wretch.

The young fisherman took his wife by the hand and led her forth from the scene, crying:

"Your noble father is avenged, and we will never look on the wretches again."

* * * * *

Count Monte Cristo, Jr., was known no more as a lion in Paris, as he disappeared from the gay city about the time that the Metcalfes and Lorenzo was banished from thence. Mrs. Metcalfe lived quietly in Paris for some time after she left her young husband, and then a longing came over her to revisit once more the home of her youth near Toulon. On the day after reaching that city she hired a small cottage overlooking the harbor, hoping that her brother would come there to reside with her. Three days after taking possession of her new home an old man came to her door leading a younger man by the hand. Mrs. Metcalfe recognized the old man almost on the instant, while he said to her in piteous accents:

"Oh, Pauline, we are beggars now, and your husband is blind. In mercy have pity on us."

The noble young woman did take pity on the unfortunate wretches, and she offered them a home in her cottage. Great was her astonishment when she learned from them that the stalwart young sailor was no other than Conrad Picardo, her old lover. Old Metcalfe and his son lived in the cottage for a few years, after which they both perished of the cholera, then prevailing in the neighborhood. About six months after the capture of the Italian some mountaineers in the neighborhood of Madrid found an old idiot roaming about the hills. That idiot was Lorenzo, the Italian, and he was sent to an asylum as a hopeless lunatic.

Marco, the former brigand, and his beautiful young wife purchased a vineyard in the south of Italy, where they lived in peace for years after. Conrad Picardo and his young wife left France soon after accomplishing their work of vengeance, and they sought a home in America, as the former young fisherman declared that he could never breathe freely in the land where he had been persecuted without committing a crime.

Next week's issue will contain "THE BOY PRIVATEER CAPTAIN; or, LOST ON A NAMELESS SEA."

CURRENT NEWS

SMALLEST ELECTRIC MOTOR

Ivan T. Nedland of Hillsboro, N. D., is the inventor and maker of what is said to be the smallest electric motor in the world. It is less than a quarter of an inch in length, but perfect in all details and operates faultlessly. About six years ago Mr. Nedland made and exhibited the smallest steam engine in the world that operated perfectly.

WOMEN CHEWING TOBACCO

Officials in Schoolcraft County were given a shock in Circuit Court at Manistique, Mich., recently when they observed some women witnesses in a criminal case calmly chewing tobacco.

The women came from Kentucky with their husbands and settled in the woods. It is said tobacco chewing among the women is quite common in the "Kentuckian settlements" in Schoolcraft County.

While the trial was in progress a group of women were quartered in a hotel. There was no

cuspidor in their room. They desired a little social chat and a chew, so they spread newspapers on the floor and expectorated on the papers.

QUANTITY OF GOLD IN THE SEA IS REDUCED BY SUN SPOTS

The quantity of gold in the sea has been reduced recently owing to the action of sun spots, according to the annual bullion letter of an English firm.

"It is reported," the firm says, "that the quantity has been recently reduced from one grain to under one-thousandth part of a grain per ton of sea water.

"We have been informed," they add, "that experts in England and in America have shown that one metal can be changed into another at certain periods of radioactivity, such as when there are sun spots. At such a time there is immense radio-action upon the earth and this is said to be the only possible explanation of the disappearance of so large a proportion of the gold in sea water."

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AROUND THE WORLD IN THIRTY-THREE DAYS

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(A Serial Story.)

CHAPTER XVII.

Almost Left Behind.

"Don't you believe it," replied the reporter, hastily making some calculations in his notebook. "Train left Vancouver to-day, due here to-night; makes connection with the express. British Columbia and Victoria people take it, preferring this to Canadian Pacific. Would not be surprised if your friend was on that very train. Excuse me a few minutes. I can easily find out. Mark Topping, you say his name is? We have wireless on trains now, you know."

He ran out and was gone about ten minutes, a messenger boy coming in just ahead of him and giving Dick a message.

It was a telegram, and Dick tore open the envelope and took out the slip of yellowish paper, upon which was typewritten:

"On train to Seattle. May 16, 1913.

"Richard Dodge, Seattle Hotel: Coming on with Aunt T. H. I. and M. B. Missing. Shall connect with express. Glad to know you are all right.
MARK TOPPING."

"Horace Ildone and Burns missing?" muttered Dick. "Then what is the use of my going on with Mark? I must find Horace. Confound that fellow in the biplane! Why couldn't he have let the steamer pick us up? Then some one would have watched Ildone and seen that he did not disappear. Confound the whole business! Here I've been around the world or the biggest part of it for nothing."

At this moment the reporter and Trix Renton entered the room, the young lady looking particularly attractive and the reporter delighted.

"Have you heard from Mr. Topping and his aunt?" asked Trix.

"I think I can get them," added the reporter, "But I've got a scheme for your beating the train, or at least catching up with it, if it has to leave without you. Jackson, the birdman, undertakes to take you even if you are three hours late, and——"

"Mark says he expects to connect with the express," said Dick. "That gives us a little over four days to get to New York. Can we do it?"

"Sure thing!" said the reporter.

Dick was at the station with Trix Renton when the train came in, and as soon as Mark saw him he came flying out and said, in lively style:

"We will take the express, my boy. We have time to get some needed things, have supper and be away. So you thought you would beat us, did you, taking the biplane? We're here, though,

and we are going right on in the same rapid-fire style as before. Come, you must lose no time. Get what things you want, you and Miss Renton, and meet us in the restaurant. We have a couple of hours to spare."

"That's all right," said Dick, "but how did you manage to lose sight of Burns and Ildone? Is the Irishman with the fellow?"

"I'm sure I don't know, but never mind that. This is Saturday night, and all the stores are open. Here is some money. You will need it, of course. I've got your baggage—what you had. I picked up your coat, but it's with my things. Come, now, hurry up and get yourself fixed out. Will you go with Miss Renton, aunty? Come on, Dick, I'll go with you, or you'll never get started."

They went off to the nearest ready-made clothing store, and here Dick was fitted out, talking meanwhile to Mark.

"How did you happen to lose track of Ildone?" he asked, trying on a coat. "Was it on the pier or on the steamer?"

"I don't know. I was anxious to find out which was the best and fastest way to travel and I suppose I neglected to keep my eye on him, and then I was anxious to know what had become of you and I suppose I forgot all about him, and any how, I may have trusted to Burns."

"How did you find out where we were?"

"I did not at first, but they said in town that you were likely to go to Seattle, as the airman was from there. They knew him, it seems. By asking questions I learned that it was better for us to go there straight and take the Northern Pacific, and I did. Then we got your message on the train, and I answered it. That's a good suit. You had better take it. Anything will do till we get to New York."

"And then you missed both Burns and Ildone?"

"Yes, and no one seemed to know anything about them. The train was going, and I thought it better to start at once. We couldn't afford to miss it, in fact. Never you mind, Burns will look after him."

"And not sell out to him?"

"No, of course not. You can trust Burns. Besides, you don't know that Horace committed the murder yet, Dick, and you can't arrest a man on any such evidence as you have."

"But I heard him tell Foxy Wilmot that he could kill him for something. Isn't that enough?"

"It doesn't say he did kill him, does it? He may have had the will but not the nerve. Killing is serious business, my boy, and men that kill don't usually say anything about it beforehand."

"Did you try to find out where the two had gone—did they go together, do you know?"

"Yes; I made inquiries, but no one seemed to know whether they had taken a Canadian Pacific local or gone to this country or remained behind, or anything about it; and so, as I could not wait there till I found out more about them, I took the train for this place and came on at a rush. Take half a dozen of those shirts. That'll be enough. We have been going some, Dick, but this is a fast train, they tell me, and we will keep up the record. If money will grease the wheels, it's going to do it, Dick."

(To be continued.)

GOOD READING

TYPEWRITING TO MUSIC

To insure more rhythm in the work, the typewriting department of the Dalton High School has inaugurated a system of typewriting to music furnished by a phonograph. So far the students find that typewriting to the tune of the "Parade of Wooden Soldiers" is helpful in effective concentration on their lessons.

THIEF IN TRICK BOX

Clever thieves varied an old trick and succeeded in robbing a jewelry store in a crowded Berlin street of about \$20,000 worth of loot recently.

Just at the noon hour, when the proprietor and his clerks locked up and left for luncheon, a dray drew up and two men unloaded a large box which they placed against the shop door. They informed inquiries that they were waiting for the proprietor's return to collect cartage. In about half an hour, saying they could wait no longer, they reloaded the box and drove away.

When the proprietor returned he discovered the loss of practically all the jewelry in the store.

SNAKE IN THE DRAINPIPE

Edward Hindershoot of Mauch Chunk, Pa., having occasion to visit his cellar the other evening, was surprised to find the floor buried under six inches of water. Never before had his drainpipe refused its office. He called Mrs. Hindershoot to bring his flashlight and soon discovered the drain was clogged. From it protruded a foot of what Mr. Hindershoot took to be a piece of black rope. It floated apparently, on top of the water and seemed to gently sway from side to side.

Mrs. Hindershoot held the flashlight while her husband sought to remove the obstructing "rope." He grabbed it and pulled and pulled without result, save a few vagrant cuss words. Finally he braced a foot against the wall, gave a mighty heave and out came the "rope" and Mr. Hindershoot sat down with a mighty splash.

Instantly his right arm was encircled by the "rope" and slimy coils fastened themselves about the man's neck. The rays of the lamp disclosed the terror-stricken victim, the swaying head of an enraged blacksnake. Fortunately Mr. Hindershoot's son arrived at this moment and, after a time, succeeded in killing the reptile. It proved to be the largest of its species ever killed in this part of the State and measured 7 feet, 2 inches in length.

Mr. Hindershoot says the capture of the snake solved the mystery surrounding the disappearance of food from his cellar. He thinks the snake must have "overloaded his stomach," and finding the drainpipe too small for its usual getaway was calmly awaiting the process of digestion when attacked from the rear.

BOY, 17, GETS \$15,000, NEEDS \$5,000 MORE

The necessary expenditures for a 17-year-old boy who will inherit a fund now amounting to \$2,800,000, which is increasing at the rate of \$50,000 a year, were set forth in a petition submitted to Supreme Court Justice Guy. The court granted an increase of \$5,000 a year in the \$15,000 allowance paid to John Arthur Hinckley of 40 East Sixty-second street.

The boy is the son of J. Arthur Hinckley, who died in 1910, leaving two-thirds of his estate in trust to his son, the other third to go to the boy on the death of his mother, Mrs. Mary Beach Hinckley. The boy is to have half the principal when he reaches 35 and the other half at 40.

Mrs. Hinckley applied to the court as general guardian for the increase of \$5,000 on the ground that since the \$15,000 allowance was made living expenses have increased, and during the last several years she has had to pay part of the cost of the boy's maintenance out of her personal funds. She estimates that she has paid \$21,000 annually for her son in the last few years, and makes an estimate of the various items, which included the following:

Tuition, \$1,000; clothing, \$2,500; tailoring, \$800; half the rent, \$1,000; half the maid service, \$900; auto, \$3,500; chauffeur, \$2,000; half the household maintenance, \$2,500; pocket money, \$500; board of dogs, \$400; amusements, \$500, and gifts to charity, \$500.

Mrs. Hinckley explained that the income is now \$50,000 a year more than the allowance to her son from his two-thirds of his father's estate.

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INTERESTING RADIO NEWS AND HINTS

WHAT IS RERADIATION?

Radio World contributes this definition of what is becoming known as the greatest nuisance in radio:

"Reradiation, or, more correctly, 'interfering radiation,' is caused by the generation of radio-frequency waves due to the persistent oscillation of one or more tubes of a receiving set, which causes interference in other nearby sets by creating a beat note—that is, by making audible the difference between the waves radiated by two receivers or by a receiver and a transmitting station's carrier wave."

AMATEUR'S WORK

To the amateur operators is due much of the credit for the position the United States occupies in radio work. The rapidity of the practical development of long distance radio communication has been largely the result of tests and experiments conducted by amateurs in determining the efficiency or inefficiency of equipment.

Fully 90 per cent. of the radio operators in the American military or naval services during the war were recruited from the ranks of amateur operators.

The amateurs have also been of valuable assistance to the Department of Commerce with its limited inspection force in helping to administer the radio laws.

AVOID SHIELDING WHEN POSSIBLE

There are usually better ways of avoiding "hand capacity effects" than by covering the back of the panel with tinfoil or copper. If shields seem to be absolutely necessary small ones should be used, shielding only those parts where capacity effects are annoying. Shielding always reduces the efficiency of the set. Spaghetti covering for wires is not nearly so necessary as many amateur builders believe, although it is mighty handy for the builder who knows that he can't build a workmanlike-appearing set. Spaghetti is only useful in preventing short-circuits between wires that are apt to touch. A good job of wiring requires little spaghetti.

YOU CAN'T TUNE THEM OUT

There seems to be an impression that some types of receivers will tune out squeals caused by nearby regenerative sets improperly handled. This is not correct. If you are tuned to WEA and your neighbor, tuning, squeals into WEA, you cannot, no matter what apparatus you have, tune out his squeal without at the same time tuning out WEA. Some sets are so arranged that they cannot squeal. This refers, however, only to squeals originating in the set and not to squeals that come in on the antenna. Of course,

a set using a loop (because of the directional qualities of the loop) would not be subject to so much annoyance as a set using an antenna.

EASE OF CONTROL

Ease of control is very essential, especially to the radio amateur in his traffic work. One cannot tune a receiver all evening merely to hear the bedtime stories from Radioville, two miles away. Don't have seventeen tuning controls on your receiver; three is plenty. A receiver may be—though they usually are not—selective with but one tuning control. Don't, however, sacrifice efficiency for ease of control.

As to the cost: buy inexpensive parts if necessary; not cheap parts; there's a difference. The cost of many receivers could be kept down by taking off the trimmings. A receiver don't need voltmeters or bezels mounted on its panel.

Be sure to purchase a good variable condenser. The one with the least parts is all right. One cannot, upon merely examining a condenser, tell its electrical efficiency. A variable condenser should be mechanically good. Hard rubber is much better for insulation on a condenser than porous, absorbent fiber. Get good mica insulated fixed condensers if you value the quality of the signals you desire from your set. See that the fixed condensers are well made and firmly pressed tight. A fixed condenser, the capacity of which varies, is worse than nothing.

NEW FRENCH RULES

French authorities have issued regulations intended to encourage broadcasting and the use of radio equipment by amateurs throughout the country, according to advices received at the Department of Commerce from the American Commercial Attache at Paris. It is provided that receiving sets may be possessed by any citizen of France who will sign a formal declaration, receivable at any post-office, stating the kind of equipment used and agreeing that no part shall be taken in the transmission of private correspondence. Sets in the possession of foreigners, or used to receive private correspondence, require individual authorization.

The right to operate transmitting sets will be regulated by the Under Secretary of the French Postal Services, on the recommendation of a permanent commission upon which public service groups, manufacturers and amateurs will have representation. Transmitting sets are to be classified as those intended for establishing private communication; public broadcasting sets; portable sets; sets used for technical experiments and amateurs' sets.

Wave length standards and other technical regulations will be set up for each class by public authority. The use of amateur and experimental sets will not involve the payment of any fees. Public broadcasting is made the subject of individual contact.

WIND CANNOT AFFECT NEW AERIAL

Another improvement has been introduced in station WBZ, following the attempt of the Westinghouse engineers to make the Springfield station as perfect as possible. This particular improvement was made to the antenna and was introduced in order to reduce the possibility of WBZ's signals of swinging out.

Fading or "swinging" is a very peculiar phenomenon, the exact cause of which has not as yet been accurately determined. It is known, however, that the swinging of aerials—both of the station transmitting and also of the receiving set—can cause fading. Fading is characterized by a complete disappearance of signals which had been received very loud a few seconds before. Even before the operator has the opportunity to readjust his receiver, the signals are heard at the same intensity as previously. Most interference is experienced when receiving long distance stations.

Although the antenna system of WBZ is one of the finest of any broadcasting stations, further improvements were added when a change was made in the method of connecting it with the transmitter. In this instance, the transmitter is used as a generator of oscillations which are modulated by voice currents. The aerial acts merely as a radiator of these oscillations. The oscillator is so connected to the radiating system, which is made up of the aerial and the counterpoise system, that the swinging by the wind or other agencies of either one will not disturb it in any way. Thus it will keep up its frequency, and no change will be transmitted from it to the aerial. A steady signal results, free from swinging and fading.

RADIO DESIGN

Many radio fans are constructing their own receivers, some of which work well, and some which are tolerated merely because the builder has not the necessary funds to make a new one. For the construction of a receiver which is to work entirely satisfactorily, a thorough knowledge of radio principles is essential, but one may get on well with a few pointers and his own common sense.

The essentials of a good receiver are: (1) sensitivity, (2) selectivity, (3) ease of control and (4) moderate cost. To combine all of these features is not as simple a matter as it may seem.

First of all, a receiver must be sensitive. This means the use of vacuum tubes, and radio frequency amplification or regeneration. For a single tube set, regeneration is quite a desirable, almost necessary application. There are numerous regenerative circuits to choose from, but for short wave reception a circuit in which regeneration takes place by use of a tickler is most satisfactory. Regeneration as secured by means of the absorption method, offers some advantages.

For selectivity, a two circuit tuner seems to be the only one worthy of consideration. Tests made last winter showed a single circuit tuner to bring in the stations a trifle louder, but the tuning was so broad that local and loud broadcasts could not be eliminated. Even a few amateurs who work on 200 meters were heard on this tuner, when tuned for the broadcasts. It

is of no use to get loud signals, if you cannot pick out the desired stations to the exclusion of the rest. The main objection a radio fan has to a two circuit tuner is the additional control.

Tuners may be made in such a way as to afford the simplicity of the single circuit tuner with the selectivity of the loose coupler tuner, by making the primary of the circuit a periodic. That is to say that the primary is not tuned at all. The untuned primary consists of from one to five turns of wire wound over the secondary coil, or coupled to it. These turns may be tapped or not. The Reinartz tuner uses a tapped but untuned primary. This is a very satisfactory method of coupling the primary and secondary circuits.

LIQUID AIR AND RADIO

Liquid air is one of the coldest things known, yet it plays an important part in radio. In the manufacture of vacuum tubes the Western Electric Company uses 150 quarts of liquid air daily, which makes necessary the largest liquefying plant in New York.

The more air pumped out of a vacuum tube the better it will function. Mercury vapor is used as the agent to pump out the air. A part of the system consists of a mercury trap inserted between the mercury pump and the tubes to be exhausted. The trap is surrounded by liquid air, which condenses the mercury vapor, freezing it to the walls of the trap as moisture is frozen on window panes.

Liquid air never gets warmer than 312 degrees Fahrenheit below zero. If a beaker full of liquid air is put on a cake of ice, the liquid air will boil briskly, because the ice, at about 32 degrees, is quite hot compared with the liquid air at 312 degrees below zero. It is said that if wool were saturated with liquid air and confined it would be more explosive than dynamite.

In the Western Electric liquid air plant the air is first compressed at 2,000 pounds pressure per square inch by four-stage air compressors. Pressure of the successive stages is 50, 175, 910 and 3,000 pounds per square inch. As the temperature of the air is increased considerably in compression, it is then passed through two cooling tanks in which the air passes through small water-cooled copper coils. The air must be purified before it passes through the liquefier, as impurities would congeal in that process at much higher temperature than the liquid air, thereby stopping up the passages. The air is accordingly passed through a series of purifying bottles. The first contains a filter which removes any oil or other foreign matter which may be suspended in the air. It then flows through two bottles containing caustic soda, which eliminates carbon dioxide. The next bottle contains water-free granular calcium chloride, and this removes moisture from the air. After the proper stage of purification is reached it passes into the liquefier, which is contained in a tank packed with sheep's wool as an insulator to keep out the heat of the room. The air then passes through a number of coils of copper tubing, and finally it is let out into the tank, where it is directed against the coils through which it has just passed. This reduces the temperature of the incoming air until it gets down to liquefying temperature.

PLUCK AND LUCK

NEW YORK, MARCH 19, 1924

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ITEMS OF INTEREST

ELEPHANTS INCREASING

The elephant is a very useful animal both for draft purposes and for ivory. A few years ago 70,000 were slaughtered annually for their tusks so that it seemed as though there was a good chance of the big animals becoming extinct. Wise laws, however, have checked the destruction so that the number is increasing. The war gave the elephants their chance and the British authorities in East Africa have also protected them. South of Zambesi the elephant is virtually extinct and the Cape market for ivory has ceased to exist. At present Mozambique is the center of the ivory trade. Oddly enough the Portuguese, through whose hands it comes, send nearly all the ivory across to Bombay, where it is sorted and cut and dispatched to the European markets. The world's supply of real elephant ivory is now about 250 tons a year.

ARGENTINE GIRL TO ESSAY CHANNEL SWIM

Lillian G. Harrison, the twenty-year-old Anglo-Argentine girl who swam across the River Plate Dec. 22, the first person to accomplish the feat, hopes to set another record by being the first of her sex to swim the English Channel. She is planning, with the backing of the Argentine Athletic Federation, to leave for England in May and attempt the crossing during the English summer.

Enrique Tiraboschi, who swam the Channel last summer and who accompanied Miss Harrison a part of the distance across the Plate, believes she will succeed in her new venture. The distance she had to swim across the big South American river was 26½ miles in a direct line, somewhat less than the Channel swim, and, according to Tiraboschi, the Channel currents are no more difficult to master than the Plate currents, though somewhat colder. Tiraboschi himself failed in an attempt to swim the Plate two years ago.

Miss Harrison won cash prizes of 7,000 pesos, two cups and a gold medal for her feat. She accomplished the distance in 24 hours 19½ minutes.

CUTTING GLASS WITH A MACHINE

Large mills sheets of glass have always been cut up into smaller sizes by hand, with much expenditure of time and with unsatisfactory results. It has been necessary to score the glass with the cutter on one side, and then break it; under this treatment there is always the risk that the under, unscored edge will crumble, or even that the whole sheet will crack. The gauging has presented difficulties, too, an allowance over the gauge reading of from an eighth to a quarter inch having been necessary.

A Newark manufacturer now offers a machine for cutting glass, based upon the new principle of scoring it on both sides. This calls for two cutting arms, two cutters, and a spring-held adjusting nut for insuring even pressure against both sides of the sheet, as well as for separating the cutters for insertion and removal of the work. Breakage is eliminated, as the sheet thus scored at identical lines on both sides comes apart at once and cleanly; while the gauge works to its true readings, without allowances. Finally, it is claimed that owing to the better regulated and even pressure on them, the cutter wheels used on the machine have from five to ten times the life of those used by hand.

LAUGHS

"Say, Esther, do you know how they summon the deaf mutes to dinner at the asylum?" "No, how?" "They ring dumb-bells, of course."

"I'd like to go to the mountains this summer, but my doctor has ordered me to the seashore." "That's funny. My doctor has ordered me to go to the mountains and I'm crazy for the sea." "Let's trade doctors."

"How's this, son? Yesterday you cleaned up the back yard nicely, but to-day it looks worse than ever." "That's not my fault, dad. I fired everything over the fence, but last night the kid next door slammed 'em back."

The new boarder seemed rather displeased; he sniffed at the contents of his coffee cup and set it down. "Well," asked the landlady in a peevish tone, "have you anything to say against the coffee?" "Not a word," he answered. "I never speak ill of the absent."

"Aren't there some jealousies in your progressive euchre club?" "No indeed," answered young Mrs. Torkins; "when we buy prizes we are always careful to select things that no one really wants, so that the winner will not be an object of envy."

The orator had made a speech, and as he left the platform he was congratulated by a friend. "A magnificent speech," said the friend, "but hardly original, for I have a book at home that contains every word of it." The surprised orator said that he would like to see the book, and the next morning he received an unabridged dictionary.

BRIEF BUT POINTED

DANISH BANKS LIMIT CLERKS MARRIAGES

Danish banks have forbidden male employees receiving less than 4,000 crowns (about \$725) a year to marry. In many of the banks most of the clerks have to work several years before attaining the minimum marriage salary.

LAND DEED, MISLAID 102 YEARS AGO, FILED

A quit claim deed dated 1822, drawn for land in Andover, Mass., has been recorded at the Registry of Deeds Office of Essex County after a delay of 102 years, because the certificate was missing among a number of other papers.

This deed transferred land near the North Andover-Bradford town line formerly owned by Samuel and Benjamin Day of Salem to the purchasers, William and Richard Haseltine of Bradford. The land is now the property of Mrs. Henry Eday of Wardhill, a granddaughter of Richard Haseltine, who on finding the deed had it filed immediately. The document was well preserved.

NO CHANGE IN BASEBALLS IN MAJOR LEAGUES

There will be no change in the kind of baseballs used in the major leagues this season.

President Johnson of the American League, in making this announcement, said the reason for the erratic behavior of the balls early last season, which resulted in an epidemic of home runs, was that their newness made them unusually lively. When the umpires were instructed to keep the spheres in play until they actually showed wear and tear, he said, the game slowed down.

"We will make no change in the ball this year," President Johnson said. "There is no need of experiments along this line. It was the new balls constantly in play which caused the havoc early last season. After the batters hit the ball a few times they will slow it up just enough to make it normal."

"Although I think the fans want to see the ball go over the fence at times, the men who are adept at making home runs will have to earn them."

WOMAN AS SECURITY FOR DIAMOND RING

When the owner of one of the leading jewelry stores in the Austrian city of Salzburg, recently saw a well-dressed young couple walk into his store he had visions of a profitable deal. Consequently, when the young man, who introduced himself as "Engineer Koerner," asked to see some rings, Herr Sikan spread out the finest he had.

After considerable conversation, "Engineer Koerner" picked out two solitaires, valued at 35,000 crowns, which figures out about \$500 in real money, explaining that he was merely acting as agent for a wealthy friend, too busy to spend time in such matters, to whom he must show the rings before closing the transaction. Handing the jeweler a bundle of checks as an advance payment and courteously requesting his companion

to await his return, "Engineer Koerner" left the store.

Hours passed, still the young woman sat waiting for her cavalier. Herr Sikan finally grew suspicious and called up the banks and the police. Then it turned out, says the story in the *Berner Tagwacht*, that the young woman knew little more about her companion than did the jeweler, having only made his acquaintance a few days before in a Vienna coffee house. The police knew a whole lot about "Engineer Koerner," however, quickly identifying him as Friedrich Schiller, 23-year-old barber and cafe pianist, with a long record of similar jobs. When arrested "Engineer Koerner" had one of the rings in his possession, as well as 6,000,000 crowns of money for which he had pawned the other.

LIFE IN THE OCEAN DEPTHS

Monotony is a strikingly characteristic of the eerie deeps, which well-nigh all types of marine animals, from microscopic forms to fishes, have made their abode. There are no seasons—uniform winter, endless night. Yet with a perfectly uncanny adaptability, protoplasm flows as serenely in temperatures sometimes below the freezing point of fresh water as in limpid pools of tropic reefs. There are no bacteria and no living green plants. A ceaseless drizzle of small organisms that have succumbed in the ocean meadows (perhaps miles above) slowly settles like gentle snow on the ocean floor and provides food for multitudes, which in turn fall prey to others, in thousands of cycles.

Deep-sea animals are much more delicately constructed than their shallower-water relatives, many having bodies thoroughly permeable to water. Sedentary forms, such as frail, phosphorescent sea pens, arborescent polyps and tall sea lilies or crinoids, rear themselves above the mud, while quaint spiny crabs, with spindly legs and egg-shell bodies, vie in slimness with the pycnogonids, grotesque "all-legs" neither spiders nor crustaceans. In the branches of these miniature forests of tree-animals dwell thousands of different species of all sorts of types. On and within the ooze are other myriads—bristling sea urchins, sea stars and sea cucumbers, inconceivably delicate shrimps, molluscs and worms.

When we ascend a great mountain the vegetation and animals change with increasing altitudes. Broad belts of approximately equal temperature have a uniform assemblage of plants and animals. So it is when with the long arm of the dredge we follow the bottom into deep waters. The lighted zone along shore teems with life unlike that at one hundred fathoms, while at five thousand fathoms still another world is seen, and so on with increasing depth. That temperature is the most important factor seems likely, for at five thousand to one thousand fathoms, for example, off California, are found relatively shallow-water subarctic types—Abstract from article by W. K. Fisher in *The Scientific Monthly*, October, 1922.

ITEMS OF GENERAL INTEREST

FOXES ARE CANNIBALS

George East has just learned that blue foxes, unless fed, will eat each other. He stocked a small island northwest of Metlakatla, Alaska, with several dozen pairs of foxes last year, spending many thousand grains of gold dust in the deal. Establishing the little animals of the rocky island, he left for the mainland on business. Bad weather prevented landing on his island for two weeks.

Upon returning seventeen adult foxes had sacrificed themselves to their cannibal brothers and sisters, while they were making mincemeat of the eighteenth. Foxes, while able to obtain much food along the beaches, must be fed regularly at least once in two days. East's loss in cash value is \$4,000, but he fears the next generation of pups will have inherited the unnatural appetite.

FAKE WINDOW CLEANER TAKES \$20,000 IN GEMS

The theft by a supposed window cleaner of \$20,000 worth of jewelry recently from the home of Reginald C. Sinche, stock broker, at 21 East Eighty-first street, was made known at police headquarters.

All that could be learned was that two antique earrings of large value were among the loot.

It was disclosed that the other day a man who posed as a window cleaner and who carried the paraphernalia for that work was admitted to the house by the butler.

The "window cleaner" was escorted to the second floor, where he remained an hour. About an hour after his departure, the butler discovered that some of the rooms had been ransacked and \$20,000 worth of jewelry taken.

MOON'S HALO IS OPTICAL ILLUSION

A time-honored sign used by many so-called weather prophets in their avocation of telling us what the weather will be is the halo around the moon. Legend has it that, when a halo is to be seen, rain is not far distant. Science tells us that the halo is an optical illusion, but places some credence in the prophet's version of it.

Under certain conditions of weather, very often preceding heavy rain, the upper atmosphere surrounding the earth contains a peculiar sort of cloud, full of tiny drops of water vapor, or even of minute particles of ice. Each of these drops or tiny icicles acts on light as a prism; that is, it "bends" the light much as the beveled edge of a mirror does. Between the moon and the earth, then, are vast numbers of tiny drops of vapor which refract light. If this belt of prisms is so thick as to catch every ray of the moon's light, we see, of course, neither halo nor moon, but only a very dense night.

It often happens, however, that most of the rays pass between the prisms, so that we can see the moon. Only a portion of the rays are deflected. All of the deflected rays reach the earth at some point, but only those that are deflected

to us. Others reach the earth hundreds of miles from us. Let us assume that we see the rays which are bent by a prism a distance of, say, a quarter of a mile to the right of the moon. It follows that we shall also see the bent ray from the prism the same distance to the left of the moon. If we imagine the moon as the center of a circle, every prism a quarter of a mile from that center, on the same plane, will bend light toward us and we shall see a halo, which is only an optical illusion but which gives some credence to the weather man's prophesies, because the weather conditions under which the atmosphere makes this possible usually precede a rain.

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Imprisoned for ten days in the hollow of a giant Texas oak tree into which he had fallen, Harry Comstock, thirty-one, was rescued recently by Baxter County deputy sheriffs and farmers who cut into the tree with an axe.

Comstock drank a gallon of water within a few minutes. He had been without food or drink during his imprisonment.

Comstock told those who rescued him that he climbed into the tree to seek shelter and that he fell into the deep hollow of the tree. He tried to get out but failed. At intervals for ten days he shouted for help. Gradually he grew weaker.

Then some one walking through the Otto Reiley ranch heard a cry for help. Finally it was traced to the oak tree and aid was summoned.

It took half an hour to hew into the trunk where the man was imprisoned. He was so weak that he could hardly speak and his voice was husky for want of water. His body was bruised all over from struggling to escape.

Comstock and his mother lived in Kalamazoo, Mich. He was brought to the Baxter County Sheriff's office, where a physician was called.

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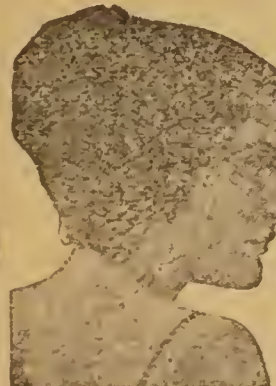
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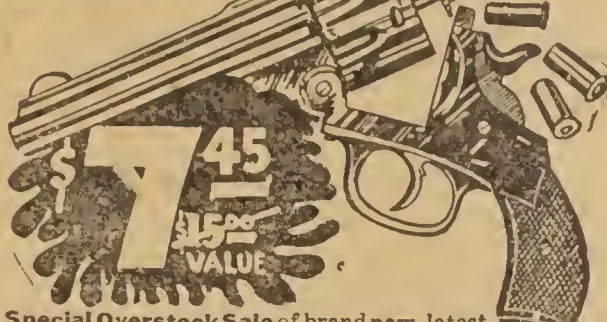
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